

T.O.S.A. NEWS

INCORPORATING *The Diaphone*

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

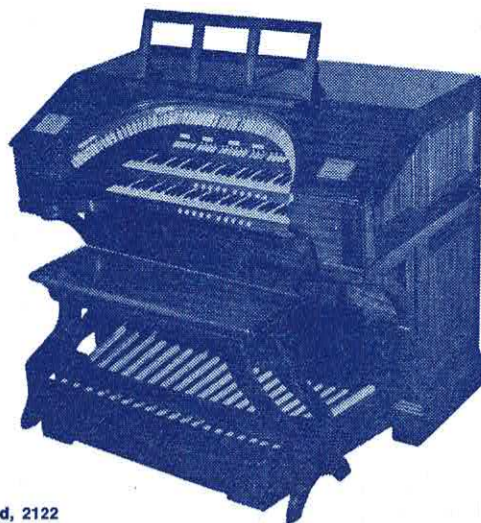
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PRICE
40c



VOLUME 9 NUMBER 12.

1st DECEMBER 1971

Merry Christmas

to all

FROM N.S.W. DIVISION'S....

Executive and Committee!

COME	TO	OUR	ANNUAL	CHRISTMAS	PARTY
COME	TO	OUR	ANNUAL	CHRISTMAS	PARTY
come	to	our	annual	Christmas	party
come	to	our	annual	Christmas	party

A fine Finale to 1971's activities for N.S.W. Division; a night for enjoyment by all;

A BUFFET-DINNER-DANCE-MUSIC NIGHT

FINE FOOD.....HAPPY RELAXED ATMOSPHERE.....PLENTY OF TIME FOR CHATTING WITH FELLOW MEMBERS.....ENJOY THE SOUND OF BILL SCHUMACHER AT THE HAMMOND.....JOIN IN THE DANCING; in fact

EVERYTHING YOU COULD WISH FOR TO MAKE THIS A MOST WORTHWHILE NIGHT, A FINE TOPPING-OFF TO A FINE YEAR FOR N.S.W. DIVISION.

THE VENUE::::: C O O L A B A H
C O O L A B A H 34 NORTH PARADE, CAMPSIE
C O O L A B A H

THE DATE::::: FRIDAY 10th DECEMBER at 7.30 p.m.
FRIDAY 10th DECEMBER

THE COST::::: A R I D I C U L O U STWO DOLLARS and
(Pay at door) One Dollar for Children !!!

The author, editor, typesetter, corrector, proof reader, Producer and Director of T.O.S.A. NEWS EXTENDS ~~THEIR~~ HIS GOOD WISHES TO ALL FOR A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new Members to N.S.W. division and advise them (and you others that don't know) that you can get badges for your lapel, and very distinctive transfers for your car windows, from the Secretary. A name badge will be sent to you shortly. Please wear it at all functions you attend. I know I have no excuse for forgetting to wear mine sometimes, but really it makes it so much easier and friendlier if we all know who we are;

John Sweetman of Heathcote
Eric H. Baartz of West Tamworth
Mr. W.B. Vernon of Croydon
Mervyn M. Blake of Engadine.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY 6th DECEMBER

NEXT TOSA NEWS DEADLINE

FRIDAY 24th DECEMBER

COMING FUNCTIONS

FEBRUARY.....STAY AROUND THIS MONTH FOR TWO VERY IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS

"NOSTALGIA NIGHT" AT THE CAPITOL THEATRE

CHATSWOOD TOWN HALL....CHARLES TUCKWELL PLAYS THE FIRST CONCERT
ON THE RE-INSTALLED ARCADIA WURLITZER (A Willoughby Council concert)

MARCH BOY OH BOY, WHAT A START TO A YEAR!!!

10th MARCH AT PARRAMATTA TOWN HALL.....ERIC SMITH ON YAMAHA

18th MARCH AT CHATSWOOD TOWN HALL.....TOSA'S FIRST CONCERT ON
THIS WURLITZER, STARRING A VERY VERY IMPORTANT PERSON

ALSO ALSO ALSO;;; CECIL CRANFIELD AT MARRICKVILLE!!!

ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

Will be held on 24th January, 1972, at St. Anne's Church of England Hall, Strathfield, commencing sharp at 7.30 p.m.

NOMINATIONS for Executive and Committee will close at the conclusion of the Christmas Party, 10th December. Mail nominations may be posted to the Secretary, to reach her by that date. (Remember this date was stretched from 8th December to allow people coming to the Party to place Nominations more easily.

All nominations are to be signed by TWO financial members, as PROPOSER and SECONDER, AND by the person nominated, indicating his willingness to be nominated.

Nominations for HONORARY MEMBERS will also be accepted, and these will be voted upon at the A.G.M.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1972 will be received at the Christmas Party. All subs received on or before the Party will entitle the subscriber to a free LUCKY ticket for an L.P. organ record, to be drawn at the Christmas Party.

NOTE THE MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING WILL BE FOUND WITH THIS ISSUE OF TOSA NEWS.

CLIFF BINGHAM IN SPECIAL CONCERT IN FEBRUARY

Monday 28th February, at 7.45 p.m., at the Salvation Army Auditorium, 10 Smith Street, PARRAMATTA, CLIFF BINGHAM will give a concert on the Thomas Organ here, with special accompanying artists.

Full details later; Tickets and enquiries from Winton Music Centre, York Street, City, or Mr. Batchelor, 631 8249

N.S.W. DIVISION'S ANNUAL CONVENTION - Further Notes. Reviews by Frank Ellis.

As the amber house lights of Sydney's Capitol Theatre began to dim, the audience settled back expectantly, ready to savour the musical delights to be offered them in the TOSA 1971 Convention. Vice-President Frank Ellis, the Convention's Master of Ceremonies, appeared on stage and welcomed individually the many interstate and country visitors, and the Official Guests of Honour, from New Zealand, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Aikin and son Bruce, before calling President Neville Wright on stage to declare the Convention officially open. This Neville did with a few well-chosen words which had scarcely died away before the mighty ivory and gold console of the Capitol's 3/15 Wurlitzer rose from the pit, bathed in the spotlights glare, and with Honorary Member IAN DAVIES happily making the kind of sounds which his fans expect of him, as the Convention really got under way.

IAN'S opening bracket, a rollicking, nostalgic flashback to the "Golden Days" featured songs sung by three of the greatest Hollywood entertainers ever to flit across a movie screen - Bing Crosby, Al Jolson and the inimitable Eddie Cantor. No less than five of Crosby's big hits were played by IAN including "San Fernando Valley", and "Where the blue of the night meets the Gold of the day". Then a bracket of Al Jolson's greatest, which included "Swanee!", "Sonny Boy", "Mammy", "Rainbow round my shoulder" etc. Then there four of Eddie Cantor's big ones; "Ida sweet as apple cider", "Makin' whoopee", "If you knew Susie." etc., By this time it would be safe to say that the entire audience were as nostalgically happy as IAN could make them. He continued with "Kiss me again", a ballad, "The Trumpeter", a bracket of four requests which included a George Wrightish "I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair", "Mona Lisa", "Lara's Theme, and the Harry Lime Theme. Then came three novelty numbers, "Dancing Tambourines", "Sunday driving" and "Song of India", played in a very Sydney Torch-ish mode. His final bracket commenced with "Valencia" and ran through a whole range of recent pops and standards such as "My Way", and "Gonna build a mountain." Whilst it was the usual happy music which IAN played, his registrations were somewhat different than he normally uses, and this served to enhance his performance. It was a happy crowd who filed out of the theatre en-route for the Lyceum Theatre and Session No. 2.

Barely 45 minutes after the Capitol Theatre concert ended, the Lyceum Theatre's curtain rose on the next event - ERIC SMITH in concert at the Christie Theatre Pipe Organ, and it was immediately apparent that he was very much "at Home" with this instrument. One could be excused for saying that it fitted him "like a glove", and that, musically speaking, it was ERIC'S "finest hour", for this was indeed, his best concert yet. From his theme, "Life is Nothing Without Music", to his stirring finale, he presented each number with style, excellent registrations and good taste. Whilst he displayed a high technical ability, he never lost sight of the fact that each item should be, first and foremost, entertaining to the audience and he succeeded admirably in this regard. The first item was from the film, "On a clear day you can see forever", and was the popular "Come back to me". Then a lilting, thoroughly delightful "Tales from the Vienna Woods" followed, before ERIC introduced his guest artist, TV personality, Ann Salisbury. It would be safe to say that Miss Salisbury won every heart in the theatre, both with her singing, and charming friendly manner, not to mention a natty turn of patter that several times had Eric Smith as the victim of a mild "Send-up". She delighted her audience with "Pedro the fisherman" and "The Little White Bull", and received a great ovation for her many talents. ERIC continued with a nice arrangement of "Flapperette", followed by a selection of songs regularly sung at the Lyceum's Sunday evening services, which concluded with "He's got the whole world in his hands." A selection from the film "Gold Diggers of 1933" carried us to the intermission. Opening the second half was Gershwin's "Of thee I sing", then came a devastating "Ritual Fire Dance", a clever Chorale prelude on "All the things you are", The Widor Toccata, and then it was time for the reappearance of Ann Salisbury, who gave us two of Gracie Fields' greatest hits, "The Biggest Aspidestra" and "Sally." Her impressions of Gracie were quite uncanny. She then sang "Maytime" in her own lovely voice and clutched at the heartstrings with "Auf Wiederseh'n". A superb performance that really pulled the house down. ERIC SMITH returned to the programme and his final bracket included amongst others, a wistful "Foggy day in London Town", and Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" March No. 4 in G. It was a splendid concert indeed, and the audience left the theatre more than delighted with the show.

CHATSWOOD TOWN HALL Installation of the 2/10 Wurlitzer has commenced at last, and all being well should be finished in January. It will be tuned to exactly a semitone above concert pitch to facilitate its use with the orchestra. Remember that this organ is old "high" pitch. This will mean that only the organists score will have to be transposed down a semitone. Let's hope it works inpractice .

TOKOROA WURLITZER FAREWELL

ORGAN RECITAL FOR PARENTS

A successful Organ Pupils' Parents' Night organised by the High School music master, Mr N. W. Saunders, was held in the school hall last night.

All pupils brought the Console up in the spotlights at stage level for their items, and their programme included music from "Lara's Theme", to some selections of Bach, all competently and colourfully played, showing the versatility of the Wurlitzer.

Pupils taking part were Jennifer Harris, Kerry Willoughby, Donna Brockway, Maryanne Butler, Dorrie Gereats, Marilyn Thorby, Christine Ryan and Ross Haigh.

EX-PUPILS ATTEND

Two ex-pupils made contrasting, but well thought out contributions. They were Brian Collier and John Givins, who had travelled from Auckland for the occasion.

Assisting artists included seven-year-old Tony O'Donoghue, making her debut at the Wurlitzer, and M. McDonald and J. Brabyn, who gave varied selections showing maturity in handling the Wurlitzer.

Directed by the band master, Mr Saunders, the High School Brass Band played two marches, "Middy" and "Victoria", and a "Gay Nineties Selection," which were very well received.

FINE CONTRIBUTION

At the conclusion of the concert, the principal, Mr T. W. Ryan, described the fine contribution the Wurlitzer had made to the school music, and announced that pupils would have continuity to study with the acquisition of a suitable electronic organ to replace the Wurlitzer.

Mr E. J. Aikin congratulated the pupils on their playing particularly emphasising the expression and colour which they created in their music, and together with members of the brass band he urged them to work and study hard to receive the rewards music can offer.

He concluded by congratulating Mr Saunders on his success in bringing music to the young people of Tokoroa, not only in the band, but also in the Saturday morning orchestral classes.

The artistry of Ann Holmes and Maurice Carbines combined not only to provide a much appreciated "swan song" for the Wurlitzer Organ in Tokoroa on Saturday night, but in music gave an outline of the instrument's use over the years.

Music from the early silent film days which needed suitable accompaniment, then to a broader offering when organists gave solos when sound films arrived, and finally, the emergence of the Wurlitzer to full concert status, was heard on Saturday night.

Maurice Carbines brought the Console up with a rousing rendering of "There's No Business Like Show Business" and commenced his part of the programme with a nostalgic "Indian Love Call" using the softer tones of the organ very effectively. He paid tribute to the "poet of the organ", Jesse Crawford, by playing many of Crawford's arrangements of well remembered evergreens in the 'twenties and 'thirties.

Particularly well received was a warm arrangement of "Grimmond," a request, and Mr Carbines concluded with his arrangements of Scottish airs.

After interval Miss Holmes was again introduced to her many musical friends, made in 12 years of Wurlitzer concerts in Tokoroa. Her programme showed how the Wurlitzer became a great favourite in musical interludes after the arrival of

sound films, and right up to the minute as a concert organ.

Her opening selection from "My Fair Lady" used all the colourful resources of the Wurlitzer and her complete mastery of this complex instrument.

A bright tone poem "Salutina" by Clementi was a searching test, both for the artist and the organ, and earned tumultuous applause. Selections by Romberg, the well known march, "American Patrol," Mexican Hat Dance," and a special George Shearing arrangement of "Blue Moon," all gave great pleasure to the audience who responded in no uncertain manner.

Next was a Wurlitzer and piano duet with Ann Holmes at the Schimmel piano and Maurice Carbines at the organ in a selection of Al Jolson memories. Both artists clearly indicated why this feature was so popular at the Civic Theatre in Auckland when they appeared there.

Miss Holmes returned to the Console for Strauss Waltzes, a brilliant transcription of Chopin's "Waltz in B Flat," and embraces 12 years of Wurlitzer entertainment in Tokoroa with a rendition of "When Day Is Done," which, to all associated with the Wurlitzer during this period, made words superfluous.

Following the speeches and presentations Mr Carbines played "Now Is The Hour" and Miss Holmes ended with the lively "Twelfth Street" and "Tiger" raga.

SOUTH WAIKATO NEWS,

Letters to the editor

Sir — A nostalgic glance at the souvenir programme which accompanied the official opening of the Wurlitzer Organ in 1967 provides at this present time ironic reading. It unfortunately shows a complete reversal of values and ideals.

The apathetic attitude towards retaining the Wurlitzer Organ demonstrates the lack of appreciation and understanding of the uniqueness of the instrument. Tokoroa has in essence made a gift to the people of Tauranga.

The fact that the organ has been put up for sale has been made generally well known. What, therefore, happened to the widespread enthusiasm and support given by the town to the organ syndicate only four years ago? An increasing lack of support has, over the years, culminated in the sale of the organ to Tauranga.

To Mr Aikin, on behalf of those pupils and teachers who were fortunate enough to have been able to play the Wurlitzer during its

short stay, I'd like to thank you. Personally I am indebted to Mr Aikin for the introduction to the world of theatre organs and organs in general. The visits of world class organists being the highlights. I am sorry that Mr Aikin will not have the pleasure of seeing and hearing more young people of his town sharing and enjoying the endless scope of the Wurlitzer. During its period at the High School the organ has been an inspiration to children of primary and intermediate school age. Many of these potential musicians have been sufficiently inspired after hearing the organ to have piano lessons in the hope of one day mastering the mighty Wurlitzer. These youngsters will not, unless they now go to Tauranga, have the opportunity of expressing themselves on an instrument of this magnitude.

Why has the town let the Wurlitzer Organ go?

JENETTE HAIGH
New Plymouth

Following the final Wurlitzer concert at the High School hall on Saturday night approximately 300 people, led by the Mayor, Mr J. F. Higgins, joined in expressing their appreciation for establishing organ music as a tradition in the school and town to Mr E. J. Aikin.

"Thanks to Mr Aikin and the members of his 'organ syndicate' here we have been able to enjoy the unique pleasure of having the Wurlitzer in our midst and having many opportunities of hearing it played by established artists," said Mr Higgins.

"He has begun a tradition which we as a town are not going to relinquish, and as a community it is up to us to help put an electronic organ in the High School hall as much as we can," he added.

The principal of the Tokoroa High School, Mr T. W. Ryan, also paid tribute to Mr Aikin and his long service in the field of music to both the school and the town.

Both Mr Maurice Carbines and Miss Ann Holmes, the two artists who performed the concert gave their concert fees towards the new electronic organ fund. They said that they wished to give something back to the town for the enjoyment they had gained from the Wurlitzer during its years in Tokoroa, and also to encourage young people to take the chance of learning to play an electronic organ, and for those who had been learning to play the Wurlitzer to keep their studies up.

Mr Aikin paid tribute to the artists and his team which had helped him maintain the organ, and thanked the music lovers of Tokoroa for their support. He asked the Mayor, Mr Higgins, to present an inscribed clock to Miss Holmes and a fountain pen set to Mr Carbines on behalf of the committee.



Eddie Aikin replies to the Mayor's and Principal's remarks. (Mayor in background)



Maurice Carbines at 2/10 console (at end of duet with Ann Holmes)



Ann Holmes (with happy smile) plays her opening number as the console rises on its hoist.



Maurice, Ann, Eddie and the school Principal, after the concert.

NEW ZEALAND'S Mr. WURLITZER.....EDDIE AIKINProfile by Frank Ellis.

The Official Guest of Honour at the 1971 Convention was our Member, EDDIE AIKIN from Tokoroa, New Zealand. Eddie was accompanied by his wife Eileen and son Bruce, and the N.S.W. Division were delighted that we were able to have them with us at Convention time. From the time he acquired his Wurlitzer organ some twelve years ago, when he removed it from a theatre, Eddie has worked ceaselessly to generate interest in the Theatre Organ, in any way open to him - as a concert instrument, as a vehicle to teach the young to play, and as a fun hobby to those whom he could involve.

He first installed it in a shed on his property and despite the problems and difficulties, he succeeded in having the organ broadcast over NZ radio stations. As well he presented concerts for the townspeople. After long negotiations he arranged to have the organ installed in the Tokoroa High School auditorium where it could reach a wider audience and could also be used to teach interested children of promise, the intricacies of the Mighty Wurlitzer. With a small band of loyal helpers Eddie carried out the removal and reinstallation of the organ which included mounting the console on a lift.

During all this time he had been making a twice yearly pilgrimage to Lower Hutt High School to maintain and service a Wurlitzer organ installed there. This involved driving hundreds of miles each year. Despite this encroachment on his limited time Eddie continued to look after this second organ for many years in order that the young players might be able to continue their practice. His own organ at the Tokoroa High School has been the venue for concerts by such famous organists as DENIS PALMISTRA, ANN HOLMES, VIC HAMMETT, MAURICE CARBINES, TONY FENELON and others. Profits from these concerts were used by Eddie to found scholarships for his young players. Any losses were carried by Eddie himself. He was ever ready to spread the "Gospel" according to Wurlitzer to anyone who would listen - one could call him an "Ambassador Extraordinary" and it would be merely a statement of fact. N.S.W. Members who have visited Tokoroa, all come away full of praise for the kindly hospitality and friendship found at the Aikin residence - a friendship distinguished by its sincerity and warmth. We were all sorry to learn that ill-health had forced Eddie to sell his beloved Wurlitzer (to a syndicate who have presented it to the people of Tauranga to be installed in their Town Hall, where it will continue to be heard in concerts and broadcasts.

For his work on behalf of the cause of theatre organ the N.S.W. Division were delighted to have this tireless and devoted organ owner, his charming wife and son Bruce as our guests for the Convention. It was our privilege to salute New Zealand's MR. WURLITZER. He was presented with an illuminated address signed by all the Conventioneers present, and room had been left for members of the Auckland Organ Society to add their names on his return to New Zealand.

REUBERT HAYES SCORES A VICTORY!!!AT KOGARAH 7th NOVEMBER

It takes more than just a good musician to make a top-flight theatre organist. He must also be something of a trouper in order to present a "Good Show" under adverse conditions, and this reviewer can think of no conditions more adverse to any artist than a near empty house. That Reubert Hayes could present such a fine performance and arouse such a warm response from the disappointingly small audience, is a high tribute to his ability as a musician and a trouper. Those who were present, enjoyed a splendid performance, a uniquely friendly occasion at a theatre we had not previously visited, plus an added bonus of hospitality from the owner of the theatre, Mr. Phil Doyle, in the shape of a delightful cup of tea in the foyer during intermission. This was really appreciated by all and we thank Mr. Doyle for his friendly gesture. It all added up to a grand morning's fun for the TOSA members who were present. Those who did not attend are the poorer for having missed out on the function.

Extensive renovations to the theatre, scheduled for completion by 9th December when the Victory will change its name to "Mecca International", are sufficiently well advanced to enable one to appreciate fully what the improvements will mean to the patron in the way of comfort and presentation. The dress circle has been re-seated and carpeted. A completely new proscenium arch has been constructed with a new fully draped, gathering curtain, the aprons at each end of the stage have been removed, and the Conn Theatre Organ Model 642, placed on a high dais on the left. A decorative grille on each side of the proscenium conceals the speaker system, which is divided, directing the strings, reeds and diapasons to the right hand side and the tibias and voxes to the left. The percussion effects all emanate from the right hand side. The result is a very authentic theatre organ sound, which is aided by the good acoustics which have always characterised this house.

OVER....

It is easily the best electronic organ installation I have heard as yet. Lighting and presentation are also first class.

REUBERT'S wide ranging programme gave plenty of scope to both organist and instrument, and he took full advantage of the situation. Highlights of the programme were selections from "Oliver", from the pen of Rudolph Friml, and from "Oklahoma". Individual items rating mention were his own composition "Autumn Shades", "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" and "Evensong". All, most enjoyable. Mr. Doyle said he welcomed TOSA to his theatre and would look forward to another such function again soon. I feel we should accept his offer - perhaps next time we may atone by filling the theatre.

(Frank Ellis)

RAY THORNLEY AT ROSELANDS

Our member Ray Thornley has been engaged to play his new Lowrey "Citation" model organ, at the Raindrop Fountain, at Roselands shopping Centre, from 7th December to Christmas eve. He will be playing 20 minute sessions with 1/2 hour breaks, from 10 am to 3 pm. This organ has built in automatic rhythm and cassette recorder; Ray invites TOSA members to visit the Centre to hear him play.

FOR SALE; Lowrey Lincolnwood Organ. 5 months old, with 2x 61-note manuals, 25-note concave radiating pedal board, latest rhythm unit, etc., etc. Cost \$4120; will sell for \$3320. E. Erwin, 11 Sanoni Ave Dolls Point, Ph 529 5113 (Home) or Bus. 20341 x 52A.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30 1971

\$7,000 for thirty-year-old Compton

FREMANTLE WILL GET RARE ORGAN

By KIM SEABROOK

A rare 30-year-old theatre organ would be installed at the Fremantle Town Hall next year, the Fremantle City Council director of cultural affairs, Mr John Birch, said last week.

The Theatre Organ Society in W.A. has imported the old Compton organ from Worthing, a seaside town near Brighton, England, at a total cost of \$7,000.

Mr Birch said the coun-

cil would build two rooms on the east side of the hall for the organ pipes.

This would be done during the building of the \$4,500 extensions to the council's administrative centre next year.

The organ would be a big asset to Fremantle and to W.A.

There were not many Compton organs left and this one was in fine condition.

It would be only the second theatre organ in the State.

The secretary of the society, Mr Ray Clements, said the group had chosen the Fremantle Town Hall because of its good acoustics for organ music and because of the liberal attitude of the council towards cultural activities in Fremantle.

"The acoustics we need create a blending of sound rather than the

clear crisp sounds many theatres are designed to produce," he said.

"In this respect the Fremantle Town Hall is just right for theatre organ music."

The organ was brought to Australia by container ship and weighs about five tons. It has 900 pipes, the biggest 16 feet long and 10 inches in diameter.

Mr Clements said the installation, which it was hoped would be started by the middle of next year, would be handled completely by members of the society.

The society was started in W.A. three years ago.

A member, Mr Vernon Kidd, said that the group's popularity was because of a growing interest by young people.

"The younger generation seems to be tired of record and radio music," he said.

"They want to get back to producing music themselves and taking part in the production of music at first hand."

WRIGHT'S ORGAN PARTY

Saturday afternoon and evening the 13th November saw a good roll-up of members and friends at "Highlands", Cecil Park, home of Alan and Elaine Wright, for an organ party and barbecue, an added attraction being Mal MacKay's travelling organ. This remarkable instrument had everyone absolutely enthralled during the afternoon; it really stole the show. Thank goodness the rain eased earlier so that one could enjoy the Wright's magnificent country property and admire the superb home and its setting while savouring a delicious barbecue tea in the pollution-free air.

The Wrights have a Thomas Catalina deLuxe organ, with instant tape playback system. Mrs. Esmay McDougall was introduced to us by Elaine Wright, and she then gave a brief demonstration and mini-concert before TOSA members Joyce Walker, Des Russell, Betty Randall and David Parsons each gave of their own particular style.

After the musical treats were over, a superb supper was laid on in true banquet style.

Thanks to Alan and Elaine Wright, Mrs. McDougall and Mal Mackay for making this such an interesting and enjoyable function.

New Lease of Life

For the Old Pipe

Wurlitzers

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN NOVEMBER "ELECTRONICS AUSTRALIA" AND SHOULD BE OF INTEREST TO ALL.

The "mighty Wurlitzer" pipe organ, little more than a memory to the older generation, is enjoying a new era of popularity around the Western world. Ironically, renewed interest in the old pipe Wurlitzer and its lesser known counterparts is being fostered by the very science that crippled it — by electronics!

The cinema pipe organ reached the pinnacle of its popularity toward the end of the silent film era. A skilled organist, watching the film from a suitably obscured position could provide anything from a stirring march to "Hearts and Flowers", according to the mood of the moment, and produce quite an array of sound-effects for good measure.

During the intermission and a featured segment of the program, the curtains would close, the console would rise into full view under the glare of a spotlight and the organist would play the requests and selections for the evening.

It is not always realised that, for the audiences of the day, the big Wurlitzer represented their only encounter with high power, high fidelity, stereo sound.

It was high power, all right: As much as a pair of ears could take! It was high-fidelity: The real thing, in fact! It was stereo, with sound coming from ranks of pipes on both sides of the proscenium.

It was in vivid contrast to the sound to be heard from horn speakers, cone speakers and the early, rather primitive dynamics.

But, of course, "talkies" took over in the cinema. While the big pipe organs held their own for a while, they were gradually outdone for both spectacle and sound, by what producers could assemble on to a sound film and reproduce through better projectors and vastly improved sound amplifying systems.

Once it became clear that the audience was being satisfied by the spectacle and sound from the screen, theatre managements began to look askance at the very considerable cost of maintaining a complex pipe organ and a highly paid artist to play it.

All over Australia, as elsewhere, the big theatre organs gradually fell into disuse and disrepair and were simply an obstruction when theatres had to be modernised and restyled for

wide screen presentation. Organs which had cost many thousands of pounds to buy and install ended up being sold for a few hundred dollars to private organ enthusiasts.

They may well have remained as odd-ball toys for odd-ball enthusiasts had it not been for the emergence of the electronic organ over the past few decades.

Compact, and not unduly expensive, electronic organs are nevertheless capable of simulating a wide range of sound, from that of a traditional pipe organ to a cinema organ, plus a variety of other sounds beyond the scope of either. Rhythm and sound effects have been added and the very latest instruments even incorporate elements from the music synthesiser concept.

For the non-expert musician, an electronic organ offers the facility to produce pleasant sound, even impressive sound, quite out of proportion to the player's skill. This is quite an attraction in itself.

Conversely, however, the number of electronic organs in use and their accessibility has made it possible for a large number of potentially talented musicians to gain experience on organs as a class of instrument. In fact, a whole new generation of organists is very much in evidence who, in the popular field and semi-serious field at least, exhibit all the skills — and more — of the older generation.

It is not surprising that such musicians should seek out and try their skills on the older style acoustic instruments. Nor is it surprising that they, and their audiences, should derive a great deal of pleasure from the sound produced by hundreds of dispersed and carefully voiced pipes.

Far from qualifying as "odd-ball", the person or the group who can own, house, maintain and exploit one of the old-style cinema pipe organs is regarded by many with a good deal of envy.

For most individual enthusiasts, the closest they can come to the situation is to own and play a not-too-expensive electronic organ, attend an occasional recital — and build up a collection of the organ recordings they most fancy.

And this is where this article really started — with the two-record set reviewed on these pages.

But how did the cinema organ come into being?

It would need a much larger volume than this to do justice to the story of a brief history of the cinema Wurlitzer; we are indebted to writer Peter Rowe and an article in "Pertinent" magazine. The article was published in 1943, at a time when the days of the Wurlitzer pipe organ were numbered but before the electronic organ had emerged on a substantial scale.

Entitled "The Romanticist of The Organ", it is reproduced with some deletions in the interest of brevity:

During the latter part of the last century arose one of the most interesting figures that the world of music has seen. Inventor, telegraphic engineer, musician, choir master, and revolutionist, Robert Hope Jones left his mark when he died in 1914 as deeply as any great revolutionist who ever organised a complete change.

Hope Jones was not a social reorganiser. His sphere of revolution was in the world of organ building. He applied the science of telegraphy in a modified form, combined with entirely unorthodox tones to the "King of Instruments".

Hope Jones was an Englishman, born and educated in England, but he did not suffer from England's supposedly national complex, conservatism.

His principal tonal laboratory in England was St John's Church, Birkenhead — a handsome example of a good sized parish church, boasting a fine organ of conventional or so-called "classic" design — the only kind of organ then in existence. Such organs graced hundreds of churches in Europe and America in those days.

The influence of what this enterprising romanticist did to that organ shook the world

of organ builders and started a controversy amongst the fraternity, which has never yet been settled.

In all probability organ builders in general will never give their okay to Hope Jones' revolutionary reconstruction of the organ. It had always remained unchangeable in an "odour of sanctity". Hope Jones gave it monkey glands; brought it before the public as an instrument that could express the whole gamut of human emotions.

In doing so, though he failed to receive the support of his fellow organ makers, he did receive the endorsement of the man in the street. Overwhelmingly the public responded to the product of Hope Jones' brain.

What's all this about? Well — it's all quite familiar really; the "Wurlitzer organ", the organ which brought organ music to millions in the world's cinemas.

Robert Hope Jones, after much experiment, applied electricity to the heavy task of playing a large organ.

Originally — and conventionally — the playing keys had to operate air valves which admitted air to the pipes. The player had to provide enough force to operate the valves and to overcome the stiffness and mass of the connecting mechanism. After being rebuilt by Hope Jones the playing keys of the St John's organ merely had to complete low voltage electrical circuits.

These circuits in turn energised small electro magnets which actuated minute air valves, arranged to act as exhausts to air-motors — like bellows. These immediately collapsed, aided by air pressure around them, pulling open the wind-valves of the pipes and causing them to speak promptly as soon as the finger of the player depressed the key.

Hope Jones' successful use of electrical energy brought many advantages to the player. The touch of the keys became as light as that of a fine piano; music could be played much more rapidly than ever before; rattling and noise, inescapable results of wear in the old type of mechanism, disappeared.

Besides this, by a simple arrangement of multiple switches, any family of pipes could be played from any set of keys in the organ allowing a much greater flexibility and the production of new and unusual tonal effects.

The introduction of electrical control in the playing console ultimately allowed ingenious touches to be introduced — tonal changes by merely exerting greater pressure on the keys, and effects resembling the plucking of strings, the notes of a banjo and the tonguing of brass instruments.

Furthermore the organist, who had previously been pinned to a position hard up against the case of his instrument, where he was unable to hear the full effect of his music, could now be situated at a distance, angle and elevation most suited to his convenience. The key desk or console was connected to the organ by a flexible cable.

When Hope Jones received permission to apply his inventions to the St John's organ he made the console, which is really nothing more than a complex switchboard, movable. A photograph still exists of the inventor sitting outside the church in the gravel driveway, playing the organ installed inside.

It was this technique that later made it possible for theatre organists to be raised from a pit as they invoked music from organ chambers situated in the proscenium or ceiling.

Hope Jones also greatly changed the tonal plan of the organ at St John's. But his path, like that of so many revolutionists, was beset by much bitter opposition from musical purists, as indicated by the fact that the St John's organ has since been rebuilt on conservative lines, the electric action removed. It is, however, to be noted that many who tried it were loud in their

praises of its ease in playing.

The original Hope Jones' actions are still preserved amongst the archives of St John's and are a monument to the skill and pioneer spirit of the "Romanticist of the Organ".

So great was opposition to the Hope Jones, idea of applying electricity to the organ and to his tonal novelties that he was eventually forced to make his home in America.

There the musical inventor and dreamer (incidentally a hopeless businessman) after sending two small organ builders bankrupt and

stranding himself on the rocks, managed to interest "Rudy" Wurlitzer, head of one of America's greatest instrument building houses, in his apparently impossible scheme of marketing an organ which would appeal to the masses; an organ capable of rendering popular songs and dance music.

Wurlitzer, a shrewd businessman, considered, saw possibilities, and entered wholeheartedly into the scheme. He placed at Hope Jones' disposal the necessary capital to develop his ideas on a grand scale, a thing which the inventor himself had never been able to achieve previously.

He was allowed to hire the finest workmen, was installed in a factory with his team of experts and supplied with every device necessary to carry out his research work and organ building.

Month after month slipped by as Hope Jones and his men laboured to produce an instrument embodying his unique tonal ideas and mechanical changes; time after time Wurlitzer was approached for his final okay to set the wheels of production going.

World famous organists were called in to try the instrument; day after day they played, noted faults and suggested possible improvements. Time after time the manufacturer refused his okay and further changes and adjustments were made, until at last he was satisfied and the Hope Jones unit orchestra went into production, to be known to the public as the Wurlitzer organ.

Hope Jones never lived to see the full fruition of his schemes, for he died in 1914, when few "Wurlitzers" had come into use. It was not until several years later that the managements of theatre concerns came to realise their value. Then as the great deluxe theatres were built the Hope Jones organs were installed throughout the civised world.

The Wurlitzer-Hope Jones' combination evolved many schemes to improve their organs. All mechanical parts were standardised and are interchangeable, an unheard of breach of organ building etiquette. Each model was also standardised, making mass production possible and making maintenance very simple.

So highly developed was the design arrived at before marketing began that it has subsequently been altered very little — yet Wurlitzer organs have been notable for their mechanical reliability and ease of playing. Large quantities of sterling silver were used in the electrical contacts to minimise electrical problems.

In fact, most organ builders have since adopted the Hope Jones' method of using electricity to lighten the organist's task and enable him to play every kind of music from a jig to an anthem.

The Wurlitzer design, as has been stated, has stood unaltered for a quarter of a century, yet these organs handle the most extravagant of modern music with the same facility that they rendered the popular tunes of Hope Jones' day.

(EDITORIAL NOTE: This last paragraph and what follows was written in 1943 — as indicated earlier.)

Electronics certainly stands as a possible rival in the "swing" field, but in all other kinds of music is sadly deficient. When a perfect electronic organ is produced there is little doubt that the house of Wurlitzer will be in the lead. Experiments have been carried out, but the time for old man Rudy to give the "okay to run" has not yet come.

Present electronic substitutes have proved no more than a very poor caricature of organ tone. The price of such instruments at present is only a fraction of the smallest Wurlitzer. Wurlitzer prices are high in comparison with the most expensive straight organs, but Wurlitzer offers an instrument which has a very high order of performance and is the acme of convenience to the player, repair man and tuner, built from the best materials the world can offer.

Hope Jones, dreamer of dreams, in revolt against accepted practices, dealer in the unthinkable, as far as the purists views are concerned, was the brains responsible for the production of this successful but controversial instrument.

He split the organ world into two schools. Many builders followed him in part, but to him,

aided by the capital and business ability of Rudy Wurlitzer, goes the honour of having brought romance and all the other human emotions into organ music.

Almost unknown to the public who enjoy the fruits of his genius he missed the glamour which he created, and the pleasure which has thrilled millions of happy picturegoers.

TO 1971 AGAIN

Big pipe organs, classical, popular and "hybrid" still provide the standards to be simulated. However, it is no longer valid to dismiss electronic organs as "sadly deficient". Such has been the acceptance of electronic organs for home, church, club and concert use that the Wurlitzer Company now maintains huge manufacturing plants throughout the world to keep pace with the demand.

In so doing, they share the market with many other manufacturers producing a range of instruments from scaled-down utilitarian models to full recital standards.

These latter instruments can simulate with remarkable accuracy the sound of popular or classical pipe organs to a degree where, in certain environments and with certain types of music, it is extremely difficult to pick one from the other by sound alone. But the vital point is that people and organisations that could not possibly afford or accommodate a pipe instrument can instal and enjoy its electronic counterpart.

However, while designers readily concede that an electronic organ should be able to provide realistic organ-like music, this is by no means a terminal objective. Techniques borrowed from computer technology are making it possible to synthesise sounds and effects outside those obtained by traditional means.

The latest model Wurlitzer, the Orbit Model 111 is a three-manual instrument with conventional organ voices and facilities. But the top manual gives access to a whole array of synthesiser circuitry, allowing the organist to produce sounds and effects of quite unique character.

In fact, it would appear that synthesiser facilities are going to be featured in at least the prestige models in the major brands. Australian Musical Industries recently announced a new Lowrey organ, the "symphoniser", while the Allen Organ Company is apparently investigating the possibility of synthesising both traditional and non-traditional sounds.

TOSA NEWS APOLOGISES

And regrets the fact that TWO mistakes were made in last issue; One being the wrong date for Wright's Organ Party. This date was changed and it seems I missed out somewhere along the line. I hope no-one was inconvenienced. Same again for IAN DAVIES at his Club. Having been told it was at Bondi R.S.L. Club and not knowing any better, that's how it went in. The correct title as I found out painfully, is Bondi Junction-Waverley R.S.L. Sub-branch Club in Gray Street. Hope not too many turned up at the wrong place.

HONORARY MEMBER IAN DAVIES ENTERTAINS

At the Bondi Junction-Waverley Services Club on Thursday 18th November, TOSA Members turned up in good numbers to enjoy an evening of electronic organ music on the Club's 3 manual Rodgers, amid a most comfortable atmosphere. Whilst allowing a few minutes for members to find parking spots, IAN DAVIES, our genial host, gave a five minute description of the Rodgers, with respect to the manufacturers themselves, the engineering of the organ and guidelines of construction of this, a relatively junior model.

IAN certainly represented it as a really superior instrument and none came away doubting his word. Past President Tom Halloran passed a few opening remarks and expressed thanks to our host and the Management of the BJWRSLS for the invitation so kindly extended to the Society, a gesture which was deeply appreciated.

Member BILL SCHUMACHER opened with a bracket including "People", "Mona - Lisa", and "Masquerade." IAN followed with a bracket of Al Jolson numbers, Handel's Water Music, a demonstration of octave pedalling, some really clever boogie-woogie, and Christmas numbers.

To quote Tom Halloran, "Ian is not by any means the decrepit old character he represents himself to be." This remark of course was warmly acclaimed.

The evening went pretty quickly and finally, BILL SCHUMACHER on the grand piano teamed splendidly with IAN on the Rodgers to provide half an hour's dance music.

(H. Duffell.)

FRANK STITT IN CONCERT By Charles Tuckwell.

The appearance of American Baldwin's Staff Organist, Frank Stitt, at the Wesley Auditorium on Friday 29th October, proved to be an outstanding success. This concert was promoted by McFarland's of Marrickville, the exclusive distributors for Baldwin Organs. The number of music lovers wishing to gain admittance was without precedence leaving some 100 patrons with standing room only; the officials soon provided extra chairs to accommodate them.

All present were captivated by Frank Stitt's unique style and musical contributions. Frank played three of Baldwin's latest models, and introduced to Australia for the first time the magical "Fantom Fingers" featured on the new 81A Model, and also demonstrated the amazing "Wonder Chord" on the E10-LB.

These outstanding Baldwin features mentioned above made a tremendous impact on the audience who showed their keen interest and enthusiasm by constant applause.

Contrary to other visiting Organists from America, who begin playing on the smaller organs and gradually progress through the range, Frank Stitt made the evening most informal by beginning on the large compact Theatre Organ and then, being the real showman, moved from organ to organ, keeping the audience guessing as to his next move.

This top-ranking American Organist, of concert and television fame, offered music to suit each individual taste, and certainly satisfied everyone present. The most amazing scene was when dozens of the audience swarmed onto the stage, at the end of the recital, for a close-up inspection, and detailed information, on the Baldwin range of instruments; especially "Fantom Fingers."

On the following Saturday morning, Frank generously gave his talents and time to demonstrate the full range of Baldwin Organs at the showroom of the exclusive distributors, C.H. McFarland of Marrickville. This large and attractive showroom was packed to capacity with prospective buyers as well as owners of other makes of organ desirous of stepping up to one of the versatile Baldwins. All present spoke highly of the authentic voicing of the Baldwin instruments and the contrast in Tone Colour which is outstanding on every model.

Frank rounded off his two day visit to Sydney with a Television appearance on Channel 10 on the Saturday evening.

A truly wonderful feat of Organ Music which will be long remembered.

HAVE YOU AN ELECTRONIC ORGAN FOR SALE?

I have a couple of buyers. Give me a ring at 412 3333 and I'll let you know if they would be interested in what you have.

NEWS FROM INTERSTATE

QUEENSLAND Thursday December 9th at the Conn Organ Centre, Red Hill; date and venue for "Bert's Teach-in". 7.45 pm, and the teacher will be Barry Bailey. Saturday 11th December commencing 4pm, at the Bailey residence, 21 Cheviot St., The Grange.....Queensland's TOSA Christmas Party. \$2.00, and \$1.00 children.

Junior organists in and around Brisbane have formed their own Organ Club\$ Open to all from ten to seventeen; hopes for affiliation with TOSA later.

Members Sue Whitehouse and another calling himself "Organic", who attended N.S.W. Division's Convention were thrilled with same and wrote very nicely about our doings, in TIBIA.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA S.A. TOSA'S Christmas Cabaret will be held at Wyatt Hall on Saturday 11th December. Alf McDonald's 4 piece band, plus WurliTzer - Tower Ballroom style. 8pm. \$2.00 a double. On 2nd October David Johnston gave a concert on the WurliTzer in Wyatt Hall. It was a thrilling concert and S.A. hopes to have him back there soon.

VICTORIA 13th October was Vic Division's Organ Spectacular at Moorabbin, to a full house of 1100. John Atwell played the 4/21 WurliTzer, Gordon Hamilton at the Conn, David Johnston at the Baldwin and Rodgers Trio, Neville McLean and Noel Smith at the Yamaha E3R, Jerry Bam at the Hammond X77 and Tony Fenelon at the Thomas Californian. A most successful concert.

Sunday November 13th at the Dendy Theatre was Vic Division's final concert for the year, with David Johnston at the WurliTzer, and the appearance of the "Punkin Players", the whole evening I believe was a roaring success, all being done in true Gay Nineties fashion, with David and the ushers dressed in striped coats, white trousers and boaters. A bouncing ball singalong, a fruity melodrama, and general fun-raising activities.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA See page seven about the installation of TOSA'S Compton Organ. We wish them every success with the venture. Soon there will be two pipe theatre organs in W.A. (The other is a 2/10 in the Metro Theatre, Perth.)

Sunday 12th December is the date for W.A.'s Christmas Party. 6pm at Vern Kidds residence, Apsley Road, Willetton. \$2.00 a head, and B.Y.O.G.

Frank Stitt performed for W.A. at the Town Cinema on 21st October. Unhappily the Organ Spectacular had to be cancelled; another function was substituted for it later in the month.

A.C.T. CANBERRA Ken Noad tells me there is a group of T.O. buffs in Canberra seriously considering the importation from the States of a WurliTzer to be installed somewhere in the city. The main difficulty at the moment is WHERE??? Sites are being considered, and the prospects of a successful venture weighed up. At the worst they will purchase a full Theatre Electronic System for installation in a public hall or the like. Good luck, folks!

NEWCASTLE Christmas Party will be held at Mara-Lynne House, Broadmeadow on Friday December the 10th starting at 6.45pm. 7th December also at Mara-Lynne will feature John Winter at the Lowrey.

A VISIT TO QUEENSLAND

Vice-President Frank Ellis recently made a short but very sweet trip to the Sunshine State, and met up with many T.O. personalities on the way. With Denis Palmistra, he called on Arthur Rizzo to see his 3 manual Rodgers Theatre Organ, which Denis said was "A whole lot of Organ." In Brisbane, Denis and he called on Wilbur Kentwell, and you can imagine how long a session an intended short chat developed into! Later Frank had the privilege of seeing Wilbur being recorded at TV station Channel 0 in Brisbane, and was most impressed by the amount of trouble the production crew went to to really show off the organist. Frank also visited Queensland Division's President Howell Whitehouse and family, who send their good wishes to N.S.W., and later visited Bill Dickinson at a Lowrey Club function, and then Les Richmond, so well remembered from his Brisbane Regent days. Frank says it was a pleasure to see and talk with his old friends Tom and Mrs. Ellis; Tom now looking much more like himself again. Summing up, it was a very happy visit that was all too short.

You won't believe this, but I've just lost the rest of the items I was going to put into this issue, which perhaps is just as well, for I can see I'm running out of space. They can wait till next time anyway,

And till next time, keep organising;

Las Gigg 20.11.71