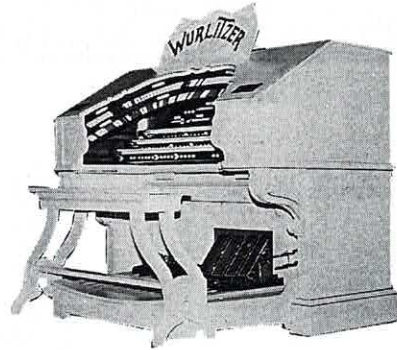
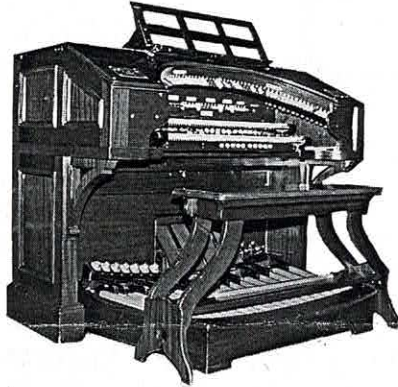


APRIL, 1993

TOSA

Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

NEWS

MEMBERS' CLUB AFTERNOON

SUNDAY, 18th APRIL

2.30 pm

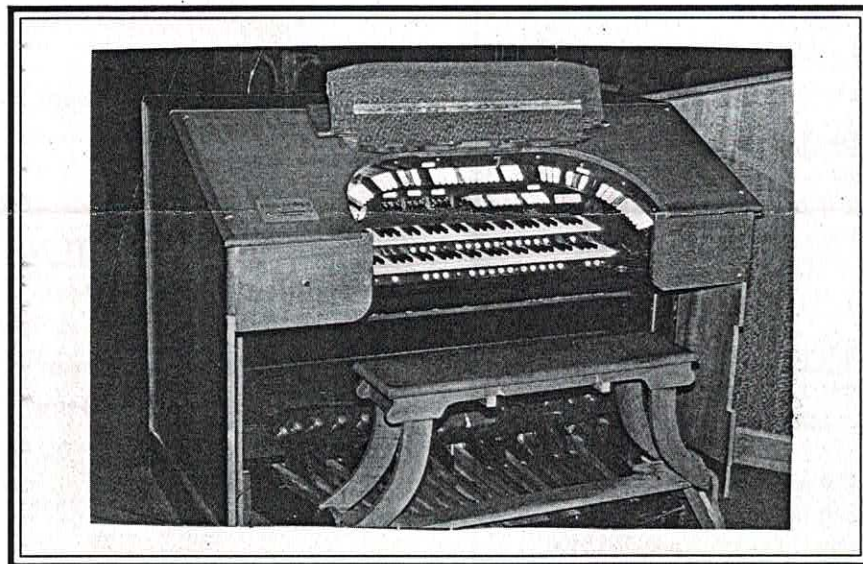
Epping Baptist Church

Corner of Ray and Carlingford Roads
(opposite Epping Railway Station)



Wendy
Hambly

Bill
Schumacher



Neil
Palmer

Chris
Styles

HEAR THE FABULOUS CHRISTIE THEATRE ORGAN

Volume 32
Issue 3
PRINTED BY TOSA

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\$1.00

TOSA NEWS

APRIL, 1993

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (N.S.W. DIVISION) Inc.

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Bob Staunton 607 8925

RESEARCH & ARCHIVES:

Ian Cameron (048) 411 616

TOSA NEWS EDITOR:

Colin Groves 745 2417
P.O. Box 1257, Burwood, 2134

TOSA PRINTER:

Robert Gliddon

CONCERT TAPE HIRING:

Neil Palmer 798 6742

TICKET SECRETARY (Concert Bookings):

10.00 am - 6.00 pm Mon - Sat only

Ed. Wharton 546 7231

P. O. Box 23

Penshurst, 2222

ARTIST LIAISON OFFICER:

Bill Schumacher 985 7318
8 Wharf Rd, Brooklyn, 2083

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Kevin Rowland, noon - 8 pm
Mobile Phone (018) 44 2308 (STD rates apply)
Barry Tooker Home: 744 1535 Work: 550 5400

CONCERT RECORDINGS:

Bill Schumacher 985 7318

PROMOTIONS OFFICER:

Kevin Rowland (018) 44 2308

PUBLICITY OFFICER:

John Shaw 759 5825

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COMING EVENTS

APRIL

Monday 5 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Friday 9 April to Monday 12 April

SIZZLIN' PIPES

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF
THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC

Adelaide

Sunday 18 at 2.30 pm TOSA Club Afternoon
Specially Invited Organists
Epping Baptist Church

MAY

Monday 3 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 23 at 2.00 pm CLIFF BINGHAM
Concert at Marrickville
Town Hall

Wednesday 26 at 8.00 pm Half Yearly Annual
General Meeting
Orion Centre Campsie

JUNE

Wednesday 2 at 7.30 pm Members' Night
Orion Centre, Campsie

Monday 7 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 20 at 2.00 pm TONY FENELON

and

JOHN ATWELL

Duo Concert
Orion Centre Campsie



**REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO
2CBA-FM 103.2**

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm.

For "Theatre Organ Highlights"
Presented by Chris Styles

Editorial

We hope to see all of you at the Epping Baptist on 18th April for our Club Afternoon. It should be very enjoyable with some of our own very capable and entertaining members playing for us. There is no admission charge but it would be appreciated if members could bring a plate for afternoon tea. Tea and coffee will be supplied.

We still desperately need a ticket secretary and box--office supervisor. Our present, marvellous ticket secretary, Ed Wharton, is under doctor's order to relinquish this position as soon as possible and we are having great trouble finding a replacement to relieve him of this task which he performs so brilliantly. If you have any idea of who might take on this vital job for the sake of the society, would you please contact our President.

Richie Willis has kindly agreed to become our Transport Officer and so if you would be willing to bring a person with travelling difficulties to a concert, please contact our new Transport Officer. Also, if you need transport to a concert, please ring Richie on 580 3581, and he will attempt to assist you.

At an inspection of the theatre arranged by the Australian Theatre Historical Society, it was very encouraging to hear the architects of the renovations to the Capitol Theatre asking about the previous organ installation. Perhaps, as part of the restoration, they may be inclined to re-install a theatre organ. That would be a fantastic addition to the theatre organ scene in Sydney.

Last month I inadvertently advertised our Half Yearly Annual General Meeting as taking place at Marrickville, but it is in fact set down to be held at Campsie's Orion Centre on Wednesday, 26th May. Sorry about that! I hope everyone remembers to change their diaries before then

Best Wishes
Colin Groves

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



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

It's quite some time since we published a list of our new members. So it's a great pleasure to rectify this omission and give a warm welcome to the following people. We hope they have a long and enjoyable time with our society.

David & Margaret Clarke - Castle Hill
Keith & Barbara Regate - Berkley Vale
John Wolfe - Tamworth
Maxwell Allen - Tinonee
Russell Smith - Kingsgrove
Eva Matthews - Punchbowl
Clare Ryan - Randwick
Donald Edmonds - Springside
Malcolm & Beth Burgess - Sylvania Waters
John Clancy - Wentworthville
Pro Hart Galleries - Broken Hill

FOR SALE

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

From The President

I feel that members should know that a short while ago some youths broke into our room near the solo chamber at Marrickville Town Hall. They ransacked through some items stored there, but I was not able to establish anything missing. They also found the practice coin-box attached to the organ console and inserted an implement that resembled a scalpel in an attempt to unlock the coin-box. However, the top end of the blade broke off in the lock and it was then impossible to open the box and remove the coins.

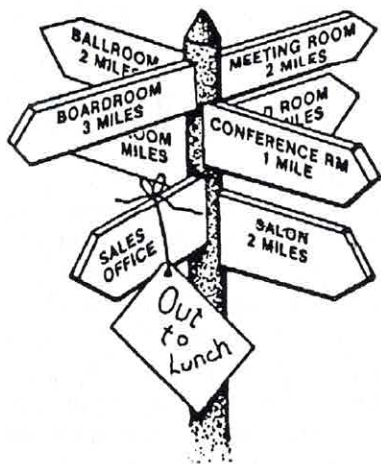
I contacted a locksmith (Apex Locksmith Co.) of Marrickville and he was unable to get it open on that occasion. He came again 2 days later with more tools and was able to remove the coin-box lid. I collected the money and he took the lid away, removed the piece of steel and re-aligned the tumblers. He only charged us \$40 for all that, when his normal call-out fee is \$40 for each visit plus repairs. So I believe he was very considerate.

The Council has put a new door on the room to replace the old, weak one, and Neil Palmer is making arrangements to relocate the coin-box to a safer area.

So much for the bad news, now to a brighter note. Sunday, 21st February saw a good-sized audience roll up for David Johnston and the Australian silent movie "The Kids Stakes". It was a great afternoon's entertainment - David really excels at the art of silent film accompaniment. To the film itself - the sub-titles were mostly self-explanatory in regard to the Sydney suburbs where it was filmed, but who picked the pond that the goat fell into as being in Centennial Park? Now hands up all those who were sure the goat race was held at the Sydney Showgrounds! To see if you were right, turn to the last item in Organs and Organists on page 4.

For those not going to the Convention, don't forget the Club Afternoon at Epping Baptist Church on 18th April at 2.30 pm. Also book your seat for Cliff Bingham at Marrickville in May. To those going to Adelaide, we will see you there.

Till next time,
Jack Lawson



NEWS

from all over of ORGANS and ORGANISTS

* **Sean Henderson**, the 15 year old Victorian organist, who last year appeared successfully in USA after winning the Junior (13-14 yrs) section of the American Theatre Organ Society's Young Theatre Organist Competition, has had another trip to America to study for a month with Walt Strony in Phoenix, Arizona, and to play for several ATOS Chapters. On the way back he also gave some concerts in his native New Zealand.

Sean is one of the young organists performing at the Adelaide Convention this month.

* **George Blackmore**, the UK organist, who was in Australia last July to open the Malvern Town Hall's **Compton**, has had the lower part of his left leg amputated. He is hoping to be still able to play after some recuperating.

* **Edith Rawle**, the mother of UK organist **Len Rawle**, passed away after a battle with cancer. She was very active in theatre organ circles in London and formed English branches of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS). Incidentally, **Len Rawle** is planning an Australian tour towards the end of the year.

* We were saddened to learn of the death of **David Johnson's** father, **Bill Johnson**, himself a noted organist and a long time member of TOSA Victoria.

* TOSA ACT celebrates its 21st birthday on 1st May.

* **Don Thompson**, from the US and who played our **Marrickville WurliTzer** last year, is playing at **Moorabbin Town Hall (Vic)** on Thursday, 6th May at 8 pm.

* The **WurliTzer** in the **Blackpool Opera House** will sing again! The contents of the Main Chamber, which were removed for the production of **Cats** in 1989, are being re-installed. Some remedial work is also being done in the Solo Chamber and hopefully some refurbishment of the console, which at present is not able to rise to its full height, will be carried out.

This **WurliTzer** was the last brand-new one to be installed in a British theatre. It was designed by **Horace Finch** and was a similar instrument to the **Tower** and **Empress Ballrooms**, apart from the almost unique **Tibia Plena** in place of the **Second Tibia** of the other two organs, and the stronger strings, i.e. **Gamba** and **Gamba Celeste** instead of **Violin** and **Violin Celeste**. It also had a phantom piano.

The **Blackpool Opera House** organ was opened by **Reginald Dixon** and **Horace Finch** in 1939, and seems to have been used mainly during winter film seasons, played by **Horace Finch** and, during the war years, by **Elton Roberts**.

* After 18 months of searching and negotiations, the **Coburg City Council** has agreed to install the ex-Cinema **North Christie**-consoled **Blackett and Howden** in its Town Hall, as part of planned renovations. **Melbourne TOSA** will contribute \$5000 towards the cost. The organ has been in storage at **Dandenong** and the **Coburg Council** has made available a workshop area quite close to the Town Hall, allowing the organ to be overhauled before its installation.

* Ever-popular **Tony Fenelon** is off again soon to the USA and UK, plus a cruise on which he will do some concerts and recording. That's certainly mixing business with pleasure in great style! Nice work if you can get it!

* **Ballarat's Compton** organ had been running out of wind until recently. A special apparatus was devised by a

member of their maintenance team, **Harry Valentine**, to measure wind pressure at various points along the wind system. This showed a major leak somewhere between the solo chamber regulators.

Because of the unique underground installation in **Her Majesty's Theatre**, lights and mirrors had to be used to try and locate the leak in the PVC pipe buried some 5 feet underground. As these efforts were unsuccessful, a local canvas/polythene manufacturer was asked to supply 12 feet of tough plastic, looking something like an oversized sausage-skin, which was fed down through the PVC windpipe and sealed at both ends, thus solving the troublesome problem.

* Although **David Johnston** lives in **Melbourne** he has been travelling far and wide in recent times. At the end of February he played for us here in **Sydney**, then in early March he played in **Perth** on their **Compton**, which is 60 years old this year. David is Patron of **TOSA/WA** which celebrates its Silver Anniversary in 1993. Later in March he played in **Brisbane** for a silent film presentation on **TOSA/QLD's Christie**.

In "**The Kids Stakes**", the silent film that David accompanied so well at the **Orion**, the goat race which seemed to be happening in **Sydney** was actually filmed in **Rockhampton**. Now how many people knew that detail?

from *Vox (Vic)*, Newsletter
(*Ballarat*), *COS's Newsletter (UK)*

CORN CORNER



When **Allan Tassaker** bought his organ, the salesman assured him that the instrument could never be stolen.

Allan, of course, asked why this was so.

"Well," said the salesman, "it has too many keys!"

On 2 CBA-FM, Chris Styles has used a recording of Gilbert Le Roy playing the Christie organ (although, surprisingly, in the cover photo it is topped with a large WurliTzer music stand!) in the Paris Gaumont-Palace Theatre just before its demolition in 1972. The following article is translated from the French cover notes, and gives an impression of the effect of this magnificent theatre and its organ.

The CHRISTIE of the GAUMONT-PALACE in PARIS

A FABULOUS PICTURE PALACE

In the 1920's, about when sound came to films, Paris saw the erection of new temples to the "Seventh Art", the cinema. The ancient hippodrome on Clichy Place in Paris was replaced by the Gaumont-Palace, the largest cinema in the world, along with its twin, the Radio City Music Hall, in New York.

This huge theatre seated 6,000 people and, though gigantic, was still able to be comfortable and attractive. Although in its shows the visual element reigned supreme, often this gave way to another form of enchantment, Music, and so at these times in the darkened auditorium the spotlights had only one target - the Organ. It surged out of the depths, with the organists creating sumptuous harmonies, while up in the heights, the thousand and one pipes responded to the keyboards, and music filled the whole theatre.

A MAGICAL SHOWPLACE

What seemed unbelievably magical in fact owed a lot to technical wizardry:

* on a lift - an organ console, i.e. 4 manuals and 1 pedal board which control a multitude of registers and couplers;

* 25 metres above the stage - 1,500 pipes made of wood, pewter and zinc, percussions bells, innumerable accessories, a blower, 2 enormous generators and the electric switchboard, the nerve-centre of the instrument;

* finally, the all-encompassing talent of the organist.

It is difficult to imagine the internal life of this colossal edifice : a huge auditorium, an equally huge stage, footlights, lighting rigs, projectors, full pipe organ equipment, below- and above-stage machinery. To light and run this little universe, it required an electric power-station that could supply a small town. This temple devoted to pictures and music dispensed a magic potion to 2 or 3 generations, removing the cares of everyday life, bringing to some a taste of adventure and to others a sense of wonder.

GILBERT LE ROY

One Thursday afternoon a little boy, as a reward for good behaviour, was brought by his mother into this giant theatre. The film was no more than "interesting", the stage show no more memorable than the taste of the ice-cream, but what enchanted and, at the same time, disturbed him was the Organ that suddenly appeared, the Organist who played and the Music that came out of the walls! One day he would also be master of the keyboards and receive the applause of 6,000 spectators. His career-path was set...! And the little boy, each day, paid the necessary price for success - scales endlessly practised, pieces constantly repeated, music deciphered and learnt!

In the 50's, the little boy had become a charming young man and, for the first time in public, he was going to conquer this monster which could be as violent as a mountain storm, as gentle as a Spring breeze, as all-enveloping as the waves of the sea in Summer. The Organ of the Gaumont-Palace was to become "his" organ. Following in the steps of his predecessors, George Ghestem, Simone Bernard, Tommy Desserre, it was Gilbert Le Roy's turn to bring this magnificent instrument to life. Imagine Gilbert's emotions when, for the first time, he played for 6,000

spectators, fulfilling the promise he had made to himself one distant Thursday afternoon! His efforts were successful on this first occasion and on all successive ones.

THE CHRISTIE ORGAN

This organ of the Gaumont-Palace, so dear to the hearts of Parisian music-lovers, had a second childhood when in 1970 it was decided to re-create the spectacular past by putting on a show in which the imaginary world of show-business would overcome the drabness of ordinary reality. The Organ, built in 1930 by the English firm "Christie", was re-designed by Gilbert Le Roy and the organ-builder, Jacques Probst. After 4 months of constant work, they brought the organ back to a perfect state of functioning, even going so far as to transform the amplitude of the tremulants, to improve the response of the percussion registers and to correct the air pressure of certain pipes to give it the brilliance and colour of the famous American WurliTzer in the Radio City Music Hall.

THE FINAL CURTAIN

But in 1972 the walls of the Gaumont-Palace, which would have resisted the blast of all the trumpets of Jericho, had to fall in the name of "progress". As for the Organ, it was removed and temporarily stored, awaiting its fate...

Let's hope to see it once again standing ready to meet other challenges, to cast its spell over other audiences and to incite other little boys to take up an organist's career.

Bernard Marçay.

Russ & Jo Ann Evans • 6521 N.E. 191st St. • Seattle, WA 98155 • (206) 485-5465

January 15, 1992

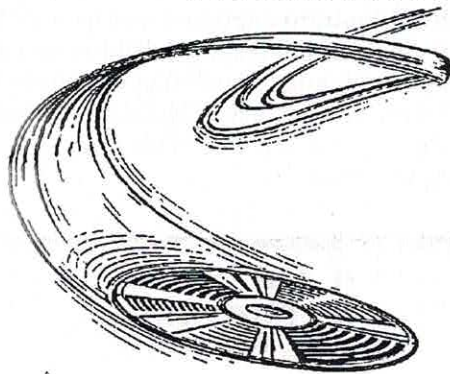
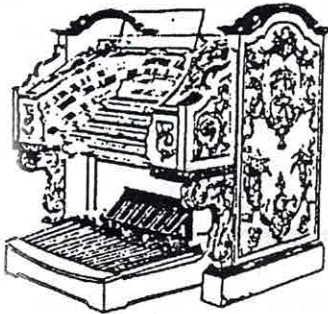
Greetings to the New South Wales Division of TOSA...

This is a much belated letter to say a very sincere "Thank You" for honoring JoAnn and me with the *Certificate of Appreciation* and Life Memberships presented to us at your November early Christmas meeting. What a surprise that was! It was truly the last thing in the world that we expected. It is, however, very much appreciated.

As I think we mentioned,...we were so bowled over that it's difficult to remember exactly what we did mention,...desire for recognition is not the reason we have helped you and others over the years. It is our love of the hobby, and our sincere desire to see others put together satisfying installations that keeps us motivated. We are so pleased that we've been able over the years to see many Aussie installations improve with a bit of help from us.

Again, thank you all ever so much. The certificate is hanging in a special place, and will always be very meaningful to us.

Sincerely,

Record Bar News

Supplied by Neil Palmer

This month we are featuring a fabulous new CD, which has just arrived, called **Not Just Another Organ Recording**. This is the review of it which appeared in the American journal, *Theatre Organ*.

NOT JUST ANOTHER ORGAN RECORDING : Trio Con Brio

.....
composed of Jonas Nordwall, Donna Parker and Tom Hazelton at the **Organ Grinder 4/51, First United Methodist 4/91, Rodgers 945, C445 and C100**. The C100 is a single keyboard sound module with 64 sampled orchestral voices.

Selections are : **Thanksgiving, High Hat, Toccata in D Major, Symphonic Suite for Three Organs, Ritual Fire Dance, Dialogue Monastique, Fantasia in F Minor K.495, Selections from *The Carnival of the Animals*.**

Performances : * * * *

Recording : * * * *

Half of the fun I had with This recording was trying to guess who was doing what, on which instrument, when? Sometimes I felt my guesses were correct; sometimes I felt they were just guesses. About the music : the **Symphonic Suite for Three Organs** was commissioned for the Trio Con Brio by the Rodgers Organ Company, and is a rather

mind-boggling work. I've always enjoyed odd and unpredictable selection choices on recordings, but this is by far the oddest and most interesting recording I've reviewed to date.

To try and review the instruments involved would be an undertaking that I don't feel equal to, because it's really more difficult than you might imagine to tell what's what when listening to this recording

The recording job must have been a massive job. It is very impressive. This is quite a recording. Be warned it is "Not just Another Organ Recording"!

Bob Shafter

This Compact Disc is available for \$25.00 each at TOSA Concerts, or by Mail Order from : **TOSA (NSW Division) Inc.**

304 Parramatta Rd
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

Postage : \$ 2.80

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JET-SETTING MEMBERS :

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3/10 Wurlitzer

From the Emerald Isle

Stanley Wyllie

joins award-winning young musician

Mark Aston

at Ossett Town Hall's unique
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Bryan Rodwell

and his

Big Band

at London's famous South Bank
4/24 "Trocadero" Wurlitzer

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Dudley Savage

makes Melotonic magic at the
"biggest 7-ranker in the world"
The Clayhall Compton

David Lowe

showcases Europe's latest Wurlitzer:
the 4/14 installation at the exciting
Granada Studio Tours complex

Britain's international ambassador

Simon Gledhill

at the 4/20 "Paramount" Wurlitzer
in Manchester's premier concert hall

The romance of

Blackpool's Tower Ballroom

Phil Kelsall

Nigel Ogden

at the superb 4/14 Wurlitzer

*** TALKS * FILM SHOW * OPEN CONSOLE * BANQUET ***

THE WURLITZER ADDRESS (cont'd)

This month's instalment of the Wurlitzer Address introduces Robert Hope-Jones, who is acknowledged as the father of the Wurlitzer. Fanny R. Wurlitzer continues the story of how the Wurlitzer company came into the theatre organ business :

Failed Businessman

Robert Hope-Jones, whom we investigated quite thoroughly before we entered into business relations with him, had been a continuous failure with everyone he had been associated with. He first began building or remodelling an organ in his own church at Birkenhead, in England. He electrified it, and that was something new. He brought the console out of the church and then played the organ (inside the church). This created quite an impression on the church world of England.

He lost his own money, building organs; he lost that of his wife, who was a very fine woman; and then he was backed by various people - in one case, to the extent of \$250,000.

But Hope-Jones was an inventor. He had a very brilliant mind, and was very persuasive. He was an unusual-looking man. But every time he finished an organ it wasn't good enough. He always had in mind building a better one next time. And that was why he lost money; because every time he build an organ it was different; he didn't duplicate anything. He was with several large firms in this country - Skinner, Austin - and then formed his own company in Elmira, which was a failure.

While at Elmira he built the Ocean Grove organ which really was an outstanding instrument and is still in use today at the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Place, in their Auditorium.

Impressive Organs

Jones came up to see us, and gave us a demonstration on the organ in St Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Buffalo; and tried to interest us in taking over his company, which was then in

receivership. My two brothers and I were there. I was very impressed. I'd never heard an organ sound like that before - it was beautiful. We then went down to Ocean Grove and heard the organ, which was marvellous. We heard Clarence Reynolds play "The Storm"; a thing that he did during the summer months.

We knew of all these failures of Hope-Jones, and knew that it had been continuous. Perhaps we were conceited enough to think that we knew how to make money with Hope-Jones and be a success. We entered into a contract with him in April, 1910, and closed the deal with the receiver in May, 1910.

Hotel Dining Room Organ

Our thinking, in the early days when we took the business over, was concerned with church business, and hotels and theatres which Hope-Jones had been working with. We didn't realise that the large movie theatres were coming. Hope-Jones had a contract with the Hotel Statler, which is now the Hotel Buffalo. Of course, the company had gone into receivership, and it was necessary to renew that contract. I went down to see Mr Statler with Hope-Jones, and we did get the contract. It was a most peculiar installation. Mr Statler had just built an addition to his hotel and had a large banquet room in this addition, on the second floor. His Grill Room - really the Dining Room - was used most by him, and the problem was that he wanted the music to be heard in the second floor Banquet Room, and in the ground floor Dining Room, which had a glass dome over it. So we installed the organ in two bedrooms that were there, and a most peculiar result occurred when we played full organ - it was softer than when we played individual stops, and we realised then that we were just encountering what was well-known in physics : the sound waves were "melting together". Although this was a narrow hall, we had the tone come out from the tone chambers that were on either side and into a common tone chute, which was the hall. We built a thin wall down the

middle of the hall - I don't think it was more than an inch and a half thick; and from then on the results were fine because the sound waves couldn't mingle any more.

That installation was quite interesting to me, and later on, when Mr Statler built his new hotel, that is still there in Buffalo, we sold him two organs, one for the Dining Room, and one for the Ballroom.

But to go back a little bit : Hope-Jones obtained some contracts for churches, and he'd come to me and say, "You know, this is really an important installation, and if we could just add this stop and that stop to it, it would make it perfect, and would mean so much to us in getting other contracts". Well, we were willing to go along with things like that, and we did. But, at the end of two years we had lost \$200,000 in the Hope-Jones organ department.

Organs For Theatres

We tried many things to develop the business. We were new to it : it was a new field. No-one had built organs for theatres before, and we got an order from the Court Theatre in New York and also from the Court Theatre in Chicago. We installed those and replaced the orchestras. I didn't learn until yesterday that just at that time there'd been a year's strike of the musicians in New York, and that made it much easier for us to enter the theatre field. They made it possible - they've been unreasonable once in a while, since then.

One of our earliest installations was in the theatre that most of you have never heard of - the Century Theatre on Central Park West. It was built by a group of very wealthy men because they wanted to do something outstanding for the theatre world. They only had spectacular shows. The one I remember quite distinctly, when we installed our organ without expense to the theatre, was called "The Daughter of the Gods". Oscar Hammerstein had written the music for it, I think, and was present.

We put in this fairly large instrument, and it was demonstrated. Not long after this, the Criterion Theatre (subsequently changed to Vitagraph) put on the first long film show in the history of moving pictures. It lasted an hour, and I believe it was called "America". Our organ was the only music that was used, and that was really an historical event in Motion Picture history.

I recall that when we used the Diaphone pipes, which most of you know were used to imitate thunder, the City authorities in New York forbade the use of them because they were afraid the plaster ceiling would come down, which it might! This of course was not a movie house built for the purpose; it was an old theatre on 43rd and Broadway which had been converted. That was the first and earliest installation of an organ where film was used.

Wurlitzer and Hope-Jones Part Company

To continue with Hope-Jones - he had a most unusual crop of hair. It was pure white and I've never seen one like

it before or since. His hair stood straight up; he really enjoyed walking down Fifth Avenue or Broadway holding his hat in his hand, and everyone turned to look at him because he was so unusual. He was a very fine man in many respects; a real inventor, and a gifted man. He was very persuasive: he could talk you into believing black was white, and I think he succeeded at times. Well, at the end of this period of time we decided that the only way we could make a success of the business was to have Hope-Jones stay out of the factory, and have nothing to do with the actual manufacturing operation of the business. We talked to him, and wrote him a letter and told him he no longer had permission to come into the plant and that we would continue to pay him just as the contract provided for. He had a percentage of the sales price, on all the organs that we sold, and we told him that as soon as the business was profitable we would then establish an experimental shop for him where he could do the experimental work, without interfering with the current work. This was necessary because you just cannot manufacture and make every instrument different from the last one you built. That, unfortunately, with his

inventive mind, was the only way he could manage it.

Death of Hope-Jones

It discouraged Hope-Jones that he could no longer come into the plant; it discouraged him that he was no longer in the public eye as much as he had been; and, as you know, he committed suicide on September 13th, 1914. It was a great pity. Had he believed in us, he would have been well compensated because the business did, a little later on, grow prosperous.

His wife, in my opinion, was a wonderful woman, very kind. She did so much for all the employees whom she had known for years. Most of these people had come over from England with Hope-Jones.

We had many, many serious problems in those early days because the loss we had was a big one for us. But throughout it all, we never lost faith in what the Hope-Jones organ was, and what he had done. We believed in his work, and we believed that we could be a success - and we were!

CANBERRA'S COMPTON ORGAN

Although Canberra's Compton organ was a relative late-comer to the theatre organ scene it has, like most theatre pipe organs, had a long and interesting life.

Originally installed in March, 1933, for the opening of the Gaumont Palace (later re-named the Odeon) in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, UK, the organ had 602 pipes in 2 ranks - namely, Diapason, Tibia Clausa, Stopped Flute, Violin, Violin Celeste, Krummet, Vox Humana and Tuba. In the parlance of theatre organists, it was a 3c/8, meaning it had 3 manuals (the top one being a coupler) with 8 pipe ranks. In addition, 4 sets of tonal percussions were provided - Vibraphone, Glockenspiel, Xylophone and Chimes, plus the usual set of drums, cymbals and other special effects.

The opening performance on the organ was played by the acclaimed theatre organist of the day, Frederic Bayco. It remained in continuous use

in the theatre until 1968 when it was removed for shipping to Australia. Surprisingly the Cheltenham organ was the first Compton Theatre Pipe Organ to be "exported" from the UK. It was bought by a commercial concern which owned the Dendy Theatre in Brighton, Melbourne.

The Victorian Division of TOSA had its WurliTzer (ex-Capitol Theatre, Melbourne) housed in the Dendy and its great success led to the management's decision to install an organ in a restaurant which was to be part of a planned re-development of the Dendy site. The Compton was chosen because it was considered desirable to an instrument smaller than, and with different tonal qualities to, the nearby WurliTzer.

A change of plan caused the Compton to be made available for sale in 1977 and a consortium of Canberra enthusiasts successfully negotiated a purchase. Shortly after, it was offered

to TOSA A.C.T., and in October, 1978, the Compton finally fell into the enthusiastic hands of the TOSA restoration team.

The organ's condition was very poor and the task of restoration seemed to be almost endless. A small band of diligent and faithful workers spent years re-leathering, soldering, mending, manufacturing, repainting, and modifying the many thousands of parts of the instrument. Thousands of man-hours and over \$40,000 later, the organ was heard for the first time in its new home, the Albert Hall, on Thursday 7th November, 1985, at 11.15pm. The organ's official opening took place on Sunday, 17th August by Tony Fenelon. Since then continued restoration and improvements have been carried out.

The Compton once again stands proud, with its gleaming white and gold console, in the elegant surrounds of the Albert Hall.

DAVID JOHNSTON IN CONCERT with "THE KIDS STAKES" REVIEWED by COLIN TRINGHAM

On Sunday, 21st February, the Orion console rose for the first TOSA concert in 1993 to a lightning-fast rendition of "One of Those Songs", revealing an impeccably-dressed David Johnston.

After a bit of chit-chat with the audience, David put us in the mood for silent pictures with a talk and demonstration of the sound effects available on the WurliTzer Organ, and included the usual romance theme, the villain's signature tune, etc., with the audience encouraged to boo and hiss at the appropriate times. This was a good bit of fun but could have been transposed to open the second half, just before the movie, where I think it would have had more impact.

A selection from "Barnum" followed, which was in keeping with the general time-period of the silent movies. The pieces were well played with the accent on sweet and traditional chords and counter-melodies. Registration changes were rather sparing and always seemed to come back to the same sound quality.

A selection from the musical "Chess" featured the plaintive song "Someone Else's Story" and David

moved away from the chorus sounds, which dominated earlier to concentrate on some of the good solo effects available.

With a Fats Waller segment, David introduced the show "Ain't Misbehaving" which opens soon in Sydney with a most energetic group of black performers. David chose to try out the piano and the percussion in an attempt to achieve that foot-tapping beat which characterises Fats Waller rhythms.

Inevitably Lloyd Webber made his presence felt with selections from "Starlight Express", the early Webber show which was performed entirely on roller skates. Train effects were quite prominent in this section which included "He Whistled at me" and concluded with an energetic "Light at the End of the Tunnel".

The first half of the show concluded with selections from "Jesus Christ Superstar" and made a feature of the less well-known theme, "Gethsemane", with fugue effects which did not quite come off for me. Throughout the first half a very prominent 16 foot pedal Diaphone over-powered many sections

Lighting of the organ console with many colour effects was worthy of special mention and praise.

After interval the organ rose again as the screen was uncovered for the silent movie, "The Kids Stakes". This film was mostly shot around Woolloomoolloo and it was fascinating to see how many places one could recognise - especially the steps which lead up to Potts Point. The actual race scene was shot in Rockhampton, as it was thought that the local Sydney wowers would object to a race with children being shown with bets being placed on the winners. The organ accompaniment was absolutely brilliant and it was very hard to concentrate on the organ alone, as David so accurately mirrored the actions on the screen, with the sounds and themes from the organ. At the end of the movie, with a masterpiece of synchronisation, the curtains closed across the movie screen as David was brought up to stage level to take his bow.

I heard comments from other TOSA members as they left the concert and all were adamant that they would like to have more of this type of entertainment.

Colin Tringham



David Johnston at the Orion console
Sunday, 21st February, 1993



Photography by Barry Tooker

Many years ago, Frank Ellis, our genial concert compere and Vice-President, interviewed a number of Australia's leading theatre organists and from these personal meetings he produced a series of interesting profiles for TOSA News and for 2 CBA-FM. The radio versions were repeated last year and we have decided to reprint up-dated versions of these historic profiles, commencing with our patron, Ian Davies.

Frank Ellis presents **PROFILES OF AUSTRALIAN THEATRE ORGANISTS**

The IAN DAVIES Story

Ian Davies is one of Australia's best known theatre organists. Like so many other theatre organists he started studying music at an early age. At the age of 7, he began to study the piano under his mother, who was well qualified to teach him, being an ALCM. Two years later, he became a pupil of Miss K. Cox (LRAM) of Ascot Vale, a well known and successful teacher, and continued with her for 3 years. It was at this stage that the pipe organ made its entry into Ian's young life. Sometimes his mother deputised at the organ of St John's Presbyterian Church at Essendon, Victoria, and as Ian's interest was aroused, he persuaded her to give him lessons on this fine pipe organ. After 6 months tuition from Mrs Davies, Ian became a pupil of the organist of the church, the well known J. Dean Wells (Mus. Bach.).

It was at the 2/10 WurliTzer of Hoyts Plaza Theatre, Melbourne, that gave Ian his first taste of the thrill of a horseshoe console, and lost no time in persuading Lionel Corrick to accept him as a pupil. Although Lionel Corrick was organist at the Regent Theatre, for Ian's lessons he used the organ in the Plaza Theatre which was located below the Regent and below ground level. It was fitting therefore that Ian's first appointment to a theatre should be to the Plaza, playing the organ that he had learnt so much on. It was early in 1946 that he was appointed to the Plaza, remaining there for 2 years and, to quote his own words, "loving every minute of it". For the next 3 years he was to double between the upstairs Regent and the downstairs Plaza, as the occasion demanded it, until 1951.

Next came a highly successful tour of the suburban cinema circuit of Melbourne, playing the electronic organ - this lasted 12 months and took him into the Padua Theatre, Brunswick, Park Theatre, Albert

Park, Barclay Theatre, Footscray, and the 2,500-seat Victory Theatre at St Kilda. At the conclusion of this season, Ian returned to his first love, the beautiful Plaza Theatre, as resident organist for a further 18 months.

Then came 5 years residency at what was, undoubtedly, one of the world's most outstanding movie palaces, the magnificent Capitol Theatre, Melbourne, with its fantastic Burley Griffin ceiling and plushy atmosphere. This "plum" posting remained as Ian's home until the shutdown of the organ.

During his seasons at the Plaza, Regent, and Capitol Theatres, Ian made regular radio broadcasts, and his theme of "Cruising Down the River" guaranteed the listeners that the 30 minutes of organ music to follow would be in the best tradition of theatre organ styling.

Ian ruefully recalls one occasion at the Regent Theatre when water pressure to the hoist built up due to a sticking valve. When Ian pressed the button to bring the organ up from the pit, the console rocked violently for a moment, then shot up at a tremendous speed, stopping at the top with a jerk that almost dislodged the console from its platform. The audience seemed to think that it was all part of the presentation, but the spectacle of the organist, hair standing on end and sheet-music spilling in all directions, must have been a never-to-be-forgotten sight.

Asked for his favourite theatre and organ, he didn't need to think long about the answer. Smiling broadly, he told me that the Plaza Theatre and organ were his idea of perfection - the console was centrally located, which made balancing the sound from each chamber so much easier. In addition, this organ spoke into the auditorium in

fine style. A case of first love being the last for Ian.

Following the shutdown of almost all Australian theatre organs, Ian moved to Sydney, where he was to be found at the showrooms of Rees Wills Pty Ltd, extolling the virtues of Lowrey and Rodgers organs. He became resident organist at the Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club. Some time later he became a member of the Board of Directors and, of course continued as their organist and Entertainments Officer.

He was made an Honorary Member of TOSA and when our Patron, Reginald Dixon, retired from the Blackpool Tower's organ and ceased to be our Patron, Ian was elected to replace him. He still remains our Patron to this day, having been in that role since 1972.

He has played over 90 concerts for the NSW Division in his long association with TOSA and has always drawn a large crowd of his devoted fans, for whom he could do no wrong.

In 1993 Ian retired from the Board of Directors of the Bondi Junction RSL, but still plays their Rodgers organ for their members. Each Friday at 1.30pm he plays a one-hour programme of theatre organ music in the Club's auditorium, and all TOSA members are welcome to attend these functions which are free of charge, simply by signing in at the desk in the foyer. Many TOSA members go along about noon and have their lunch in the Club's restaurant, before proceeding into the auditorium on the first floor for Ian's music show.

Friendly, natural, talented, and a sparking personality withal - this is Ian Davies' Profile.

Frank Ellis

FOR SALE

BY TENDER*

3 manual 19 rank WurliTzer theatre pipe organ

or as parts

This instrument includes genuine, high quality theatre pipe organ components - some are the only examples of their type in Australia.

Mostly WurliTzer with Gottfried, Barton, Dennison, Robert Morton, Wangerin, Kimball & Trivo.

SHORTLIST: WurliTzer Tibia 16' - 2', Gottfried Posthorn, WurliTzer Oboe Horn, Barton Saxophone, WurliTzer Tuba with Ophicleide, WurliTzer Orchestral Oboe, Clarinet, Style D Trumpet, Vox, Open Diapason with metal Diaphone, 4 different sets of strings, Concert Flute with Bourdon, Kinura, TUNED PERCUSSIONS and TRAPS, 3 manual double bolster WurliTzer CONSOLE, BLOWERS, CHESTS, REGULATORS, TREMS & SHADES.

*Tenders close 30th April, 1993. Offers have been received from overseas for a number of choice items. My strong preference is for these to stay in Australia. Background to this offer follows.

For full details and conditions of sale please call; Ian McLean on 06 2975600
(leave a message or try 018 628 682)

WHY IS THIS INSTRUMENT IS FOR SALE?

Ian McLean explains : The sale is due to a drastic change in my employment, following the collapse of my employer of nearly 5 years during October/November 1992. Although re-employment has occurred, the reality is that it could take another 3 years to build my income back up to a level that would allow this project to proceed. This means that my project cannot now be realised for probably another 10 years (it was to have been playing October 1993) if at all. I do not wish to become yet another Australian Theatre Pipe Organ collector who allows the artisan's work to remain lifeless in crates and warehouses. **This instrument must be sold, preferably for a new installation in Australia.**



**EPPING BAPTIST CHURCH
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HISTORY OF EPPING BAPTIST'S THEATRE PIPE ORGAN

In 1932 the owners of the Duke of York Theatre in Eastwood decided that a theatre organ would be a desirable addition to their theatre. After hearing demonstrations of WurliTzer and the Christie unit organ in the Lyceum Theatre, it was decided to purchase a Christie organ for Eastwood.

The organ was duly installed in less than a week! Stan Cummins opened the organ on 14th May, 1932. Other well-known Sydney organists who presided at the console between 1932 and 1940 were Penn Hughes, Cyrus Tuckwell (brother of Charles), Brian Hatfield and Ray Chaffer.

From 1940 onward, the organ sat unused with the only person to use it being Jack Pitt, the theatre's electrician and projectionist, who occasionally played it just to keep it going. One day the then manager, Alf Shaw, heard him and arranged for the organ to be played on Friday and Saturday nights. Alf Shaw was later to

become a good friend of TOSA when, as manager of the Capitol Theatre, Sydney, he gave the ultimate in co-operation in our dealings with access to that organ, now in Campsie's Orion Centre.

Like most of the other Sydney theatre organs, The Eastwood Christie was shut down in 1956, under the onslaught of television. Although the theatre continued for some time as the Odeon, the organ was sold to Epping Baptist Church for 750 pounds, a relatively high price at the time.

The church actually received a bargain at this price because the instrument was in good condition, had not had hard and long usage, and had not been subjected to the ravages of pollution, as had been those in the city and inner suburbs.

The subsequent two years saw the organ rebuilt by various church members under the guidance of Ernest

Hood. The percussion instruments were removed, the only tonal percussions retained were the Glockenspiel and Chimes.

The newly-restored organ was opened on 29th August, 1959, with a special service and recital played by well-known Sydney organist, Paul Edgar.

In 1967 the organ was removed and stored pending the building of a new extension to the front of the church. It was re-installed in new chambers installed in a much more conventional location.

By 1979 the organ was becoming unreliable and TOSA was contacted for advice about improvements. Eventually it became clear that a total rebuild was necessary. This huge task was undertaken and completed just in time for the TOSA Convention at which Cliff Bingham played on Easter Saturday, 1985.