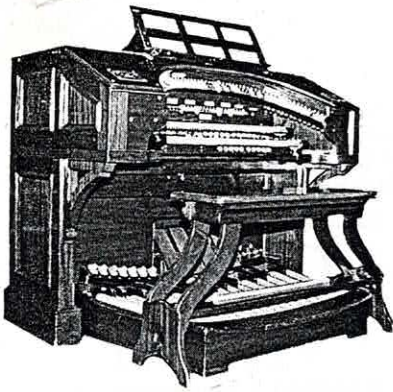
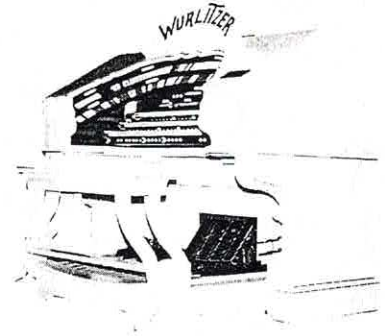


MAY, 1994



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA NEWS



3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Tony FENELON and John ATWELL on the Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ and Grand Piano



Sunday, 29th May at 2pm
Orion Centre, Beamish Street, Campsie

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Issue 5
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TOSA NEWS

MAY, 1994

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

* DIRECTORY *

PATRONS:

Ian Davies
Mayor of Canterbury, Ald. John Gorrie

PRESIDENT:

Cliff Bingham (Work) 708 6566
(Home) 482 1438 (before 9pm)

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Frank Ellis 649 7011
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Mary Stewart 557 5045
G.P.O. Box 67, Sydney, 2001

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ASSISTANT TREASURER:

Bill Schumacher 985 7318

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Walter Pearce 716 0151 (after 7 pm)
P.O. Box 243, Burwood, 2134

COMMITTEE:

Neil Palmer 798 6742
Ross Adams 639 6343
Barry Tooker 744 1535
Colin Groves 745 2417

John Parker

Paul Luci (043) 74 1108

PRACTICE CONVENOR (Orion):

Paul Luci (043) 74 1108

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):

George Newell 750 0362 (Mon - Fri: 10am - 6pm)

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

LIBRARIAN:

Mary Stewart 557 5045

TRANSPORT OFFICER:

Ritchie Willis 580 3581



COMING EVENTS

MAY

Monday 2 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**
Wednesday 18 at 8.00pm **Half Yearly Annual
General Meeting**
Sunday 29 at 2.00pm **Tony Fenelon and
John Atwell Concert**
Orion Centre Campsie

JUNE

Monday 6 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**
Sunday 12 at 2.00pm **Members' Afternoon**
Mosman Baptist Church
Wednesday 29 at 7.30 **Members' Playing Night**
Orion Centre Campsie

JULY

Monday 4 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**
Sunday 24 at 2.00pm **Charlie Balough
Concert**
Orion Centre Campsie

AUGUST

Monday 1 at 7.30pm **Committee Meeting**
Sunday 28 at 2.00pm **Ray Thornley 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

From The President

Greetings!

The past month has been a very busy one for your committee - what with the **David Johnston** concert, the members' afternoon at **Epping** and, for one of our committee, **John Parker**, a trip to **Perth** for the **National Convention**.

For those of you who missed **David's** concert, you missed a treat. He had put a great effort into the programme and it showed! The audience also recognised a fine artist and responded appropriately.

It was good to see forty-plus people at **Epping Baptist Church** where a wonderfully informal afternoon of good fun, food, friendship and, of course, music was enjoyed by all around the beaut **Christie** organ. A similar afternoon is planned at **Mosman Baptist Church** in June on the **Standaard Theatre Organ**. Please put it in your diary - June 12th, at 2pm.

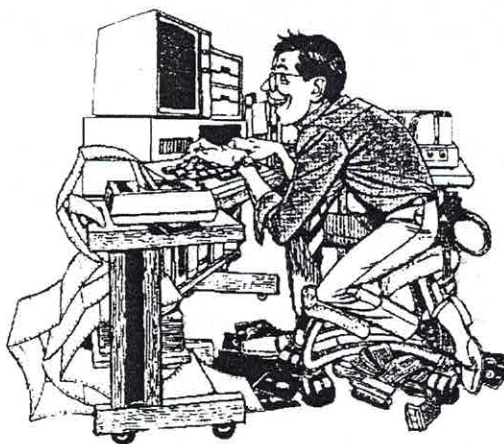
As this issue went to press, I received a verbal reply from the **Orion Centre** booking officer regarding our request for members' practice time. I am pleased to report that the reply was favourable. There are logistical details to be worked out and priority will be given to those of our members who regularly practised at **Marrickville**. Full details will be in June **TOSA News**.

The **Marrickville** console has been disconnected and dismantled, and is being moved to **Peter Jewkes'** workshop on 7th May for a complete rebuild and electrification of the stop and piston action. We are pleased to report that all components for this work have now arrived from overseas and work will proceed forthwith. Special thanks to committeeman **Neil Palmer** for his work in getting the console to a transportable state and to committeeman **Ross Adams** for providing his truck.

Some concern was expressed at the last committee meeting regarding the fate of the twelve 32' Diaphone pipes "entombed" under the floor of the

Articles in this journal need not represent

the views of the committee or the editor



Orion Centre. A set of unfortunate circumstances some 10 years ago saw the pipes placed under the **Orion's** floor and the floorboards laid over them with no proper access for maintenance, much less any restoration. Efforts will be made to salvage what we can of these fairly rare pipes and, who knows, we may hear their "ominous rumblings" some time in the future.

It was good to see that a number of our **NSW** members, some 15 or so, made the long trek to **Perth** over Easter for the **Convention**. From reports received, a good time was had by all. And speaking of conventions, it's our turn again in 1996, following **Melbourne** next year. It seems like only yesterday we were planning **Sydney '91**. Ah well! Here we go again!

Until next month,

Cliff Bingham

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome to our society the following new members, and we hope they enjoy our musical company for a long time to come:

Joy & James Smith - Forestville
John Rogers - Winston Hills
Herta Molodysky - Oatley
Muriel Wittey - Springwood
Ruth Nancarrow - Springwood
Sydney Metcher - Hurstville

Editorial

An exciting piece of news about the **Orion WurliTzer** is that the **Canterbury Theatre Guild** is planning to use live theatre organ accompaniment for parts of their production of "**Singin' In The Rain**". This is especially appropriate as the show is set at the end of the silent movie era when the use of theatre organs was at its peak. It will be fascinating to see the organ integrated into a great musical comedy. The dates for the show are 13th, 14th, 15th, 20th and 21st May, and I'm sure a lot of **TOSA** members will want to be there!

A reminder to all members that the annual membership fee falls due on 30th June (not at the end of the calendar year). Please rejoin promptly as **TOSA** has lots of interesting concerts and other activities lined up.

Our wonderfully efficient Membership Secretary, **Walter Pearce**, has asked me to particularly point out 3 things in regard to membership:

(i) A husband and wife can join for the one fee, but if both of them wish to have voting rights a 50% extra fee needs to be calculated and added to the basic fee.

(ii) The committee has decided that for the pensioner concession a **Federal Government Pension Card** is required, and that **Senior's Cards** are NOT accepted to obtain the concession. This is because our fees are already very low and have not been increased in over 10 years, and the means-tested **Pension Card** is at least a guarantee that the holder is in genuine need of financial support at the Society's expense.

(iii) Our rules require that members who wish to discontinue their membership should advise our Membership Secretary (as opposed to the more common procedure of just not paying their next annual fee). In this way our records can be cleared of the names of people who no longer wish to be a part of the Society.

Don't forget that page 2 of every **TOSA News** has a list of all the Society's voluntary officials and an address or phone number where they can be contacted (preferably at reasonable hours, please!).

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

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



Robert G. Cornish of Mona Vale writes :

18/2/94

I'm sure all members, like myself, are disgusted with the way the **State Theatre** organ has been literally left to 'rot'.

Personally I would be happy to donate cash and time to help re-build that organ if it was at all possible for **TOSA** to acquire it, presuming of course the instrument was 'fixable' and able to be housed in a worthwhile venue.

I have a certain affinity with the old **State** organ, not so much that I was a professional player of same but in the early years of its installation, I would often be taken by my parents to see some film of the day and of course be mesmerised by the organist ascending from the pit and by the eventual recital.

But to cap it all off, many years later, when visiting **Palings Music Showroom** in **Sydney**, I was lucky enough to meet a young salesman (I think his name was **David**) who, apart from talking me into joining **TOSA** and giving me a spare copy of "**The Diaphone**" (the Society's first magazine, as you are no doubt aware, and a couple of issues of which I still have), invited me to come down to the **State** at 6.30am one morning, where a few members and myself could have a 'bash' on the console, all with the approval of the management.

I don't have to tell you the degree of excitement and anticipation that overwhelmed me leading up to that moment! Everyone in the Society, being lovers of "**WurliTzers**", would surely understand the joy of moment! Of course **David** came to my rescue in selecting the right registrations and stops, standing beside me as I did my best to make the thing 'talk'! I remember him saying to me, "Ease off on the accent pedal, **Robert**, before

you smash the chandelier - it's starting to vibrate!" And it was!!

So now you understand my desire to see the old 'girl' restored and 'rehoused' somewhere other than in the **State Theatre**, before the rats demolish it!

For the benefit of all organ lovers on the north side of the harbour, and again presuming the above-mentioned organ could be acquired, why not approach the proprietor of the still-beautiful **Collaroy Theatre**, looking as good as new and giving excellent programmes as well as good service? But, primarily, there is a huge space fronting the screen, which I feel could be adapted to accommodate the likes of the **State** organ. As the proprietor is an Independent cinema operator, I'm sure he would see the **State** organ as an added draw-card if approached by the right "ambassador" from the Society!

So much for my "pipe-dream"!! - Just a thought, but I know one hell of a lot of enthusiasts would get behind it!

Yours sincerely,
Robert G. Cornish

*I agree with most of what you are suggesting, **Robert**, but I would like to see this organ remain in the fabulous **State Theatre** and for it to be restored there - for all future generations of theatre-goers to experience in its original site.*

The Heritage order on the building would prevent the organ from being removed, even though it can't force the owners to keep the instrument in working order.

*However, recently there have been a few hints that something may be done to start to bring the organ back to its former glory, but I'm not holding my breath!!- **Ed**.*

Roy Walkley from Goulburn writes:

16/3/94

I have been a member of **TOSA NSW** for only a few months, but I felt that I should write and congratulate you on the quality of the monthly newsletter. Each time it arrives I have been delighted with the articles contained in it.

The March edition is no exception. The tribute to **Noreen Hennessy** was very appropriate. Although in my younger days, we didn't get to the city

cinemas very much, the **Prince Edward** was the favourite whenever we were able to go. I can still remember the particular way in which **Noreen** said, "Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen!" It really made one feel good to be there.

I can also remember hearing **Barrie Brettone**r playing at the **Savoy, Enfield** and surrounding areas, although this must have been during the mid to late 1940's. The **Savoy** was our "local". Theatre organists didn't quite get the media attention which modern artists seem to thrive on. But we did check out who was playing the organ before deciding which of the nearby theatres we would go to. Certainly **Barrie Brettone**r was a real favourite.

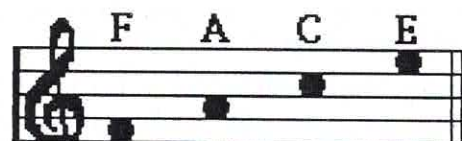
Thanks once again for top reading.

Yours sincerely,
Roy Walkley

*On behalf of the contributors to **TOSA News**, thank you, **Roy**, for your kind words - it is always reassuring to know that someone has appreciated the effort that goes into each Newsletter.*

*I'm sure that **Frank Ellis'** terrific historical articles bring back a lot of memories for many people.*

*Thank you too for your reminiscences - I always enjoy hearing the personal memories that people have of earlier times. -**Ed**.*



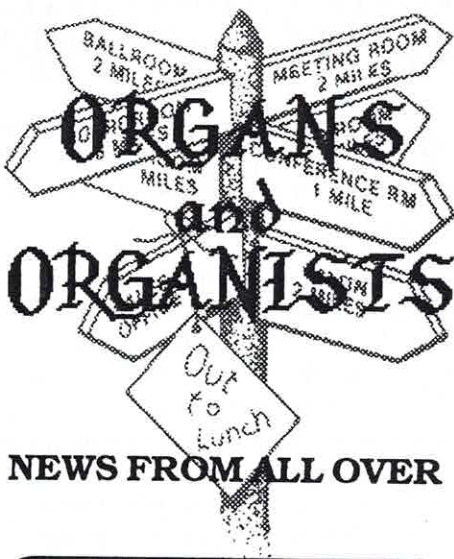
THE MUSIC
With **Allan Tassaker**

A friend of Allan Tassaker's offered to paint his music-room for free. Unfortunately, his friend was rather clumsy and spilt paint all over the keyboards of Allan's organ.

Allan tells us he ended up playing the blues all night!!



by Neil Palmer



NEWS FROM ALL OVER

ENGLISH LOSSES

The theatre organ world was saddened by the news that two of England's finest theatre organists died earlier this year.

Ernest Broadbent, who for a long time played at the **Tower Ballroom Blackpool** died on the 19th January at the age of 83.

George Blackmore, well known to **Australian** audiences, died on 20th February at the age of 73, after bravely overcoming the amputation of part of his foot.

NEW ZEALAND

Canterbury Theatre Organ Society, whose patron is no other than **Tony Fenelon**, has proudly announced its inaugural concert to introduce their **Rodgers "Trio" Electronic Theatre Organ** to their members and friends.

The concert was held on 21st April in **Christchurch College of Education**, with several local organists doing the honours.

GET WELL SOON

Longtime member of TOSA, Mrs **Marge Soloman**, unfortunately had a bad fall recently which resulted in a broken hip, but she is now progressing very well after a hip replacement operation.

She is currently convalescing in **Greenwich Rehabilitation Hospital**.

All her TOSA friends wish her a speedy and complete recovery.

TEST DRIVE

The Duet

My sole employee and yours truly were seated side by side, ready to try out a second-hand demo manual on loan from a local dealer. My employee seemed a little anxious.

"Hang on a minuet!" I shouted. Then I finally added, "OK, put your foot down now! This looks like a sleek model!"

Soon, I had to add, "Ease off, you're going too fast! It's starting to vibrate!"

Still the purr of the machine was music to my ears.

However the movement was still a bit rough!

"Make sure you observe all stops!" I said shortly. "You can see them sticking out a mile!" I was getting restless since, as we proceeded, my employee seemed to be getting a little careless.

"Watch out for that semi!" I screamed. "We have no lights!"

I thought his timing was right off - I felt sure he had had one too many! He eased off a little, but I was still nervous. I couldn't keep up with his fancy antics!

He was becoming breathless - I could see that I was fast running out of staff!!

"Please stop at the next bar!" I screamed.

I had made up my mind to return the **Thomas** organ to the dealer - I would hang on to my **Lowrey Celebration** instead!

I reckon I deserve it after this lot!!

Yours Truly,

Allan Tassaker

FOR SALE

Technics SXU90 Organ

Perfect Condition

With some music and instruction manual

Will accept reasonable offer as it has to be sold

Martin : 520 8572

FOR SALE

Kawai E600 Organ

Roll-top with

2 full manuals

2 octaves of pedals

Swell, Synthesizer,

Reverb, Autorhythm,

Electrochord

In Excellent Condition

\$1,000

Phone: (02) 484 4541

Cherrybrook

The GORDON THEATRE'S CHRISTIE UNIT ORGAN

After some hard searching, **Rob Gliddon** has produced the following article on the almost unknown history of TOSA's latest acquisition.

Of necessity, the history of this organ will be brief - facts about its life in the theatre are few. Should any member have any further information on the instrument, either when it was in the theatre, or after its move to **St Columb's Church, West Ryde**, please contact the Editor of TOSA News.

The **Gordon Theatre** opened in 1924 in Werona Avenue on **Gordon's "East Side"**. **Sydney's** North Shore was home to only a few cinemas (only 2 with theatre pipe organs), as much of the area was only just starting to develop in the 1920's and 30's.

The proprietors of the theatre, during June, 1929, placed an order with **Hill, Norman & Beard** for a **Christie Unit Organ**. Of very modest size (2 manuals and 5 ranks), this instrument, allotted Job Number 2766, when received in **Australia** was placed in storage. This same organ later found a home in the **Ritz Theatre, Central Concord**, in March, 1930. Still later, in 1935, it was "rebuilt and enlarged" to finally move to the **Melba Theatre,**

Strathfield!!

To complete the story of the **Gordon** organ we must return to November, 1928, when an organ was ordered for the **Lyceum Hall, Sydney**. This instrument, a "Model C2" of 2 manuals and 8 ranks, was allocated Job Number 2743. When shipped to **Australia** it was also stored. However, in late 1929 it was hired (or leased) to the **Gordon Theatre**. Just in case you're wondering, the second **Lyceum** organ, a "Model D2 with extras", was ordered in August, 1929 and was duly installed there on arrival from **England**.

Modifications to the **Gordon Theatre** to accommodate the organ were minimal. The console was placed on a slightly raised dais at the stalls level, centre stage, and the chambers were located back stage behind the screen. This arrangement created a problem, in that the sound of the organ was muffled unless the stage curtains were opened, and so most organ presentations were made in this way.

The **Christie** was opened by **Idwal Jenkins** on Monday 14th October, 1929. Billed by the management as "Australia's Best Organist", **Mr Jenkins**, who sometimes went under

the stage name of "**Idwal Jay**", was resident in the local area and used to walk to the theatre.

Valda Kersey became resident organist during 1930 and this was her first position after having studied organ with popular **American** artist, **Joseph Wayne**.

It would appear that she played there for many years. The late **Ronald Roberts**, writing for the "**Music Maker**", wrote thus of her playing in 1939: "Her presentations at the **Gordon Kings** are shows worth hearing.... She was good when I first heard her 5 years ago; to-day she is even better." "**Music Maker**" reported in August, 1940: "Unfortunately, **Miss Valda Kersey's** performance at the **King's Theatre, Gordon**, are limited to only one night a week".

It is known that during 1932 the organ was broadcast over **Radio 2CH**, firstly on Friday, April 22 by **Percy Burraston** (sometime representative for **Christie Organs in Sydney**) and secondly on Friday, August 26 by **Valda Kersey**. We're pleased to reproduce the programme here for you. Radio certainly had a much different format way back then! (See below)

WIRELESS WEEKLY

Friday, August 26, 1932

Friday, April 22, 1932

2CH

SYDNEY,
248 Metres

- Red Sarafan *Matre*
8.0: FROM THE GORDON THEATRE—*Wartlamoy*
PERCY BURRASTON, International Concert Organist—
Selection, The Desert Song *Romberg*
8.10: FROM THE STUDIO—GRACE MOORE, Soprano (recorded)—
By the Dead in the River *Italo Goodman*
8.16: FROM THE GORDON THEATRE—
PERCY BURRASTON, Organist—
Crushed Petals *Marsden*
Charmeuse *Daron*
8.20: FROM THE STUDIO—LIGHT OPERA CO. (recorded)—
Rigoletto Selection *Verdi*
8.34: FROM THE GORDON THEATRE—
PERCY BURRASTON, Organist—
Old Plantation Melodies *Arr. Burraston*
At Sunset *Arr. Burraston*
8.44: FROM THE STUDIO—JOSEPH HISLOP, Tenor (recorded)—
The Grey House *Message*
To the Children *Rachmaninoff*
8.50: FROM THE GORDON THEATRE—
PERCY BURRASTON, Organist—
Songs of the Sea *Arr. Burraston*
Tally Ho *Arr. Burraston*
9.0: FROM THE STUDIO—
MUSICAL ITEMS (recorded).
9.15: Third News and Commentary.
10.0: STUDIO MUSIC.
10.30: Close.

2CH

SYDNEY
248 Metres

- Day Sessions as usual.
5.10: "THE FAIRY GODMOTHER."
5.55: "THE HELLO MAN."
6.40: AN ADDRESS BY REV. D. J. KNOX (Church of England).
EVENING SESSION
7.0: CHIMES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.
7.2: RECORDED MUSIC.
7.30: VALDA KERSEY AT THE ORGAN—
Grand Opera Selection *arr. V. Kersey*
Shepherd's Dance (Henry VIII. Dances) *German*
Serenade *Pierne*
7.40: RECORDED MUSIC.
7.50: RUGBY UNION TALK by C. L. BROWN.
8.0: VALDA KERSEY AT THE ORGAN—
Kashmir Song *Finden*
Goodnight, Little Girl *Dubison*
Valse de Fleurs (Nut Cracker Suite) *Tschilkowsky*
8.10: RECORDED MUSIC.
8.25: VALDA KERSEY AT THE ORGAN—
Reve Anglaise *Rubinstein*
Marche Militaire *Schubert*
From the Land of the Sky Blue Water *Cadman*
8.35: RECORDED MUSIC.
8.50: VALDA KERSEY AT THE ORGAN—
Promise You'll Remember Me *Brown*
Morning (Peer Gynt) *Orleg*
Drink To Me Only *Marilyn*
9.0: FROM THE STUDIO—RECORDED MUSIC.
9.15: THIRD NEWS AND COMMENTARY.
10.0: STUDIO MUSIC.
10.30: Close.



ferry to **Milson's Point** and, from there, a train to **Gordon**.

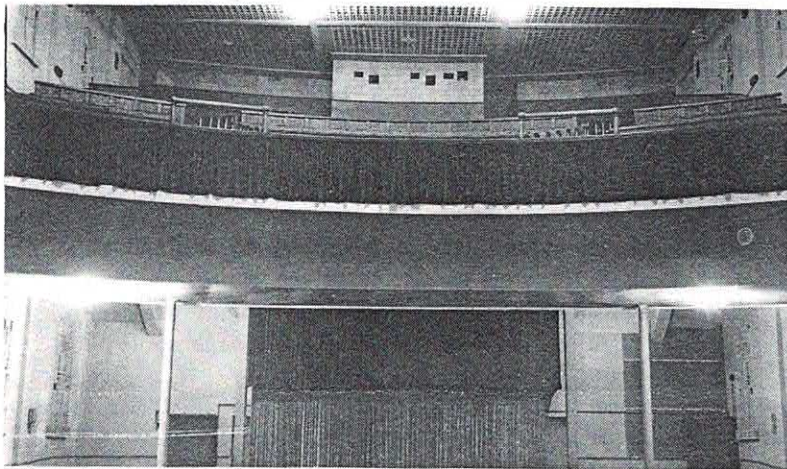
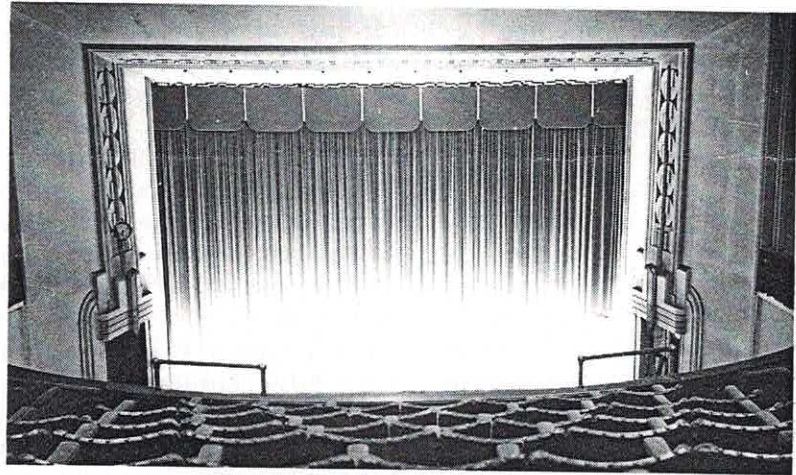
One night a gentleman in uniform approached **Lance** saying he played theatre organ and was invited to play. This fellow was **Les Richmond** who later became well known as organist of **Brisbane's Regent Theatre**.

During **Lance's** incumbency the **Christie** was tuned and maintained by well known organ technician, **Sid Noad**. Following holidays in 1946 **Lance** was replaced at the console by **Muriel Jeavons**. However, her length

It is difficult to establish a pattern of usage of the instrument from 1940-1944.

Just recently I spent a pleasant couple of hours with **TOSA** members **Lance and Marj Wells**, who have many fascinating recollections of the theatre organ scene during the 1930's and 40's.

Lance studied theatre organ technique firstly for a few months with **Joseph Wayne**, who was imported from the USA to open the **2/10 WurliTzer** at the **Kings Cross Theatre**. Later, **Lance**



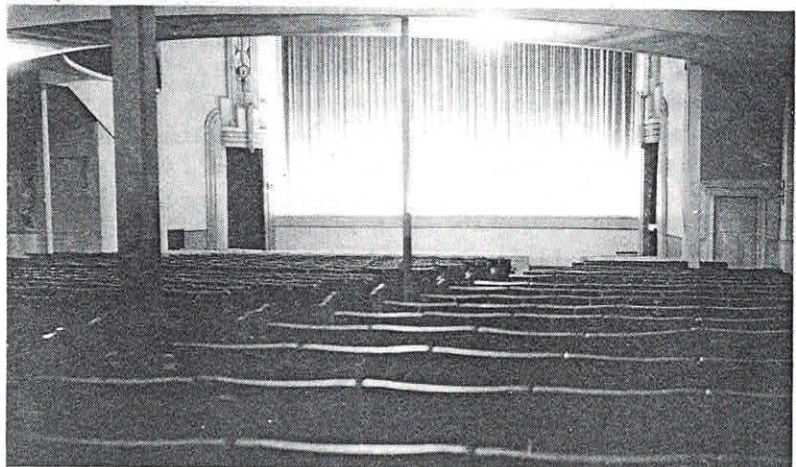
of stay at the console is unknown.

With the coming of Cinemascope, the organ console was covered over. It is believed that sometime later the console was brought forward of the screen and used again. The organ was sold to **St Columb's Church** in about 1957 for a small sum - variously reported to be either 200 pounds or 350 pounds. The theatre closed in 1963 and was demolished - a block of flats now stands on the site.

Rob Gliddon

had more instruction from **Idwal Jenkins** at the **Gordon Theatre** and subsequently with the famed **Eddie Horton** on the **3/10 Christie** organ at the **Roxy Theatre, Parramatta**.

In 1945, **Lance** became resident organist at the **Gordon Christie** for some 2 years, although the organ was only featured on Saturday evenings. During this period, petrol was still rationed, so **Lance and Marj**, who lived several streets away from Kurraba Wharf, **Neutral Bay**, used to catch a



The **RAY CHAFFER** Story

Unlike many other organists, whose stories have appeared in this series, **Ray Chaffer** did not commence his musical studies with either the piano or the organ. He was born in the **Sydney** suburb of **Summer Hill**, where he started to learn the fife at school. It was not long before he became the leader of the fife and drum band, and when the **Duke and Duchess of York** were in **Australia** for the opening of **Parliament House** in **Canberra** he played before them at the **Maypole Dances** held at the **Sydney Cricket Ground**.

His grandparents were both very musical - his grandmother being a church organist, whilst his grandfather was a choirmaster. It was natural enough therefore that about the age of 9 years, **Ray** should commence to learn the organ with full encouragement from his grandmother. At the age of 11 he was organist at the **Leichhardt Baptist Church**. Answering an advertisement by an organist who required someone to play for him while he conducted the church choir during practice, **Ray** was accepted and received lessons on the pipe organ in return for his services.

When he reached the age of 16 he obtained his first professional job as an organist at the **Rockdale Methodist Church**. About this time he heard the **American** theatre organist, **Fred Scholl**, who came from **Grauman's Chinese and Egyptian Theatres** in **Hollywood** and who was the opening organist at the **Wurlitzer** of **Sydney's Capitol Theatre**. Like so many church organists before him **Ray** was completely captivated by the wonder and majesty of the theatre organ and in due course he gained permission to practise on the **Wurlitzer** of the **Kings Cross Cinema**, where **Joseph Wayne** featured at the console.

At the age of 21, he secured his first appointment as a theatre organist. He became resident at the 2 manual **Christie** organ of the **Duke of York Theatre** at **Eastwood**. A strange coincidence perhaps that his first theatre should bear the name of the member of the Royal Family for whom

he had played at the **Cricket Ground** so many years earlier.

The lot of the theatre organist at the **Duke of York Theatre** however was not all roses. A very cost-conscious management permitted the organist to have only one hour of practice time each week. Doubtless this was to reduce the theatre's electricity bill, but it meant that **Ray** had only those 60 minutes to arrange and practise his weekly programme. Nevertheless he remained in residence there for about 2 years, after which he moved to the **Astra Theatre, Parramatta**, playing afternoons and evenings, with a special midday shoppers' session every Friday. The organ here was a 2-manual **Christie** with a glass console equipped with coloured lighting. **Reg Payne's** partner in the **Astra Theatre, Alf Richards**, then formed a partnership with his brother to open the **Astra Theatre, Drummoyne**. **Mr Payne** did not join in this venture, but later built and operated the **Regent Theatre** at **Wentworthville**. It was arranged that **Ray Chaffer** would be the organist at the new **Astra** at **Drummoyne**, whilst still continuing his residency at the **Astra, Parramatta**. **Ray** was at **Parramatta** for about another 2 years, appearing afternoons and evenings, with 3 shows on Fridays, as well as appearing nightly at **Drummoyne**.

In 1937 he auditioned for the **Western Suburbs Cinema Circuit** and was immediately accepted. The audition was before the circuit's organ manager, **Vic Pearson**, and was held at the **Strathfield Cinema**. The item which secured the contract for **Ray** was *Softly Awakes My Heart* from *Samson and Delilah*. He was appointed to the **Savoy Theatre** at **Enfield** and opened his season a week or so later. The Company's organ policy was for each organist in the circuit to be in residence for about 6 months, after which time all organists were switched around to other theatres. **Ray** settled down to the routine of 6 months seasons, and during the next few years he appeared at the **Palatial Theatre, Burwood; Strathfield Cinema; Civic Theatre, Auburn; Roxy Theatre,**

Parramatta; Civic Theatre, Hurstville; as well as the **Astra Theatre** at **Parramatta**. He then started on his "second time around" the circuit.

Organ presentations in all **Western Suburbs' Cinemas** were a specially featured part of the show and were given the utmost in polished presentation. A few seconds before 8pm it was usual for the house lights to dim and from the bottom of the pit the organist chimed the hour of 8, followed by the drum-roll to introduce the National Anthem, then finally a trumpet fanfare heralded the Newsreel. At the end of the Newsreel the organ rose from the pit for the featured presentation.

Ray recalled one amusing time, when arriving at the theatre a little later than usual, he hurriedly started to change into his evening suit, and he was down to his underwear when he realised that he just couldn't dress in time. He rushed from his dressing room, started the blower, entered the pit and sat at the console to play the chimes, anthem and Newsreel fanfare, dressed only in his underwear and feeling very grateful for the covering darkness at the bottom of the pit! He then finished dressing during the Newsreel, arrived back at the console with a minute to spare and then rose immaculately attired for his solo spot!

Ray also recalled that, some time later when the presentation format had been changed to have the console up for the Newsreel fanfare, he was "playing in" the Newsreel one evening and became so engrossed in the first news item on the screen that he continued to play while watching. He was jolted back to reality by the Chief of Staff, who had hurried down to the front stalls, whispering loudly, "**Ray**, take the console down, for Gawd's sake". As **Ray** himself put it, "Those were the days!"

In 1941 **Ray** entered the Army and saw service for the next four and a half years. Whilst stationed near **Brisbane** he played the **Brisbane Town Hall** organ and was invited to give a public

recital. However whilst this was being arranged, the Army saw fit to move him on to **New Guinea**, where he played for Army concert parties. He also played for concert parties in **Bougainville**.

On his return to civilian life, he opened at the **Roxy Theatre** at **Parramatta** again, and also took a course on piano with **Majorie Hesse** at the **Sydney Conservatorium**. Following the season at the **Roxy**, he went around the circuit once more, finishing up at the **Auburn Civic Theatre**. The Company then retrenched all its organists, who had been playing twice daily. Shortly afterwards they

re-engaged several of their organists to play evenings only in their larger theatres. This arrangement continued until the eventual shut-down of all the organs, when the Company sold all the instruments in their theatres.

Ray, having spent 20 years with the company, then took his long service leave, after which he entered the retail trade with the firm of **David Jones**. Between 1949 and 1953, he played the organ of **Scots Kirk** in **Mosman** for special Easter and Christmas services. He was also the organist for the **David Jones Staff Christmas Choir**, which performed in the store during the festive season and became an annual attraction.

On one occasion **Ray** relieved **Charles Tuckwell** at the organ of the **Arcadia Theatre** at **Chatswood**. His favourite theatre and organ was the **Savoy** at **Hurstville**, of which he had many happy memories.

He became resident organist at the **Manly-Warringah Leagues Club** in 1962, happily playing a **Wurlitzer** electronic organ in the Dining Room and a **Lowrey** organ in the Lounge.

A friendly and sincere person indeed, **Ray Chaffer** always enjoyed recalling the many happy years he spent as a theatre organist.

Frank Ellis

A Wurlitzer WEDDING

TOSA Committee Member and Organ Builder, **John Parker**, married fiancée, **Tracey Lamaletie**, at the **Orion Centre, Campsie**, on Friday 11th March, before a gathering of some 80 friends and family. **John's** Best Man was **Robert Gliddon**, and **Tracey's** Bridesmaid was **Tracey Perry**.

The **Wurlitzer** was in fine form in a more "straight" role to accompany the 20 minute service, and was ably played by Sydney organists,



David Drury, Peter Jewkes and **John Hardicker**.

The guests were treated to a reception, also at the **Orion**, with music provided in lighter style by both **Bill Schumacher** and **John Hardicker** at the **Wurlitzer** and grand piano. Vice President **John Shaw** and **Jim Perry** also took a turn at the piano.

Guests danced to the organ and recorded music till the early hours, with everyone appearing to have a great time, celebrating **Tracey** and **John's** special day.

Reports on CHRIS McPHEE

When the Young Theatre Organist Competition is over each year, reports appear in various international theatre organ newsletters and in 1993 Chris McPhee received high praise in these articles. Reproduced here are items from the American Theatre Organ Society's magazine, *Theatre Organ*, and a glowing review from England's Cinema Organ Society's magazine, *Cinema Organ*.



Winners all — (left to right): Rich Lewis (1992 overall winner), Chris McPhee (1993 senior and overall winner), Susan Lewandowski (1993 junior winner) and Mark Hawon (1993 intermediate winner)



SENIOR WINNER
AND OVERALL WINNER

Chris McPhee

Sponsored by Australia/Felix Chapter

Chris McPhee, sponsored by the Australia/Felix Chapter, is 19 years old and is employed by Australia's largest Building Society, working in the Treasury Department. He is also studying Financial Markets.

Chris began learning electronic organ at the age of nine studying through the Australian Guild of Music and Speech, gaining Associate Diploma (with honors) in 1992.

He achieved full marks for Matriculation Music Performance and Theory through the South Australian Education Department in 1990. He was awarded the Royal School of Church Music Scholarship in 1992 (classical pipe organ). He was introduced to theatre organ four-and-a-half years ago.

Chris has performed in several theatre organ concerts. He recently traveled to America to pursue theatre organ interests. Chris is Vice Patron of the Electronic Organ Club of South Australia and he enjoys listening to all types of music from rock to classical.

An Aussie Gledhill?

The final artist was nineteen year old Chris McPhee from Australia. Here was, in my opinion, the Aussie version of Simon Gledhill. Brimming with confidence and with a charming microphone manner, he shruggingly laughed off an initial error (not realising the previous player had left the sforzando pedal locked on), by telling everybody that the Wurlitzer back in Aussieland hadn't got a sforzando pedal, so he hadn't a clue what was going on. He restarted his opening number, 'I want to Be Like You' from *The Jungle Book* and from that moment we realised we were witnessing an exceptional talent. Chris's playing was one of the high spots (at least for me) of the Convention, with imaginative and utterly suitable registration. He continued his programme with 'Easy to Love' and his own arrangement of 'Waltzing Matilda'. We hope to hear more of Chris — maybe he'll issue a recording soon, (he has access to the Capri Wurlitzer — now there's a fabulous instrument). If you get to read this, Chris . . . how about it?

Rich Lewis was invited back to the console to play a final item and we all left the theatre happy in the knowledge that we had been privileged to hear some fine playing from four youngsters all of whom want to pursue a career in theatre organ playing.

**EXCITING
NEWS FOR
CHRIS
McPHEE
FANS
See Page 11**

1993 Contestants for the National Young Theatre Organist Competition

*They are all winners!
They have
worked hard.*

What a joy it is to see a full audience of theatre organ members give a standing ovation to our young talented winners of the ATOS National Competition.

It is always wonderful to know that our professional artists are working with these young people. The future of theatre organ is secure in the hands of these young adults.

Special thanks to Walt Strony and Melissa Ambrose Eidson, the teachers who prepared our three winners for their cameo performances.

We are looking forward to 1994 when we will hear Chris McPhee play his first full concert.

We certainly were proud of Rich Lewis, our 1992 overall winner, when he played his full concert this year. A special thank you to Tom Hazleton who worked with Rich Lewis.

*Dorothy VanSteenkiste, Competition
Chairman*

CHRIS McPHEE is back !!!

SUNDAY, 15th MAY at 2.30 pm

CHRIS McPHEE

at Epping Baptist Church

Epping Baptist is close to Epping Railway Station. Corner of Ray and Carlingford Roads



Suggested donation :
Adults \$10
Concessions \$5

Epping Baptist Church is pleased to announce the next event in its popular series of public performances featuring the marvellously talented Chris McPhee

Chris McPhee was the senior and overall winner of the American Young Organists' Competition in 1993 and he proved to be very, very capable and popular when he played the Orion Wurlitzer in February this year.

On this occasion he will be featured on the versatile, dual-purpose Christie pipe organ, previously installed in Eastwood's *Duke of York / Odeon Cinema*.

Half Yearly Annual General Meeting

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to unforeseen circumstances (beyond our control) the half-yearly Annual General Meeting has been changed from Wednesday 18th May, 1994 to Wednesday 25th May, 1994 at the Orion Centre, Campsie, NSW. (7pm to 11 pm)

Come a
have

SECRETARY

Report by John Shaw on DAVID JOHNSTON CONCERT at the ORION Centre on Sunday 27 March, 1994

As usual a very warm welcome awaited this very entertaining organist from **Victoria**. The concert opened with selections from *Oliver* and *The Boy Friend*.

humour again with a "fun" piece, *I Wanna Be Loved By You*, with most absurd and humorous registrations that he could think of. After a **Chaplin** and **Mack and Mabel** selection, including

Webber's latest show *Sunset Boulevard*. An interesting number was the tango called *This Time Next Year*, which perhaps was a hint from **David** that he would like to visit again.

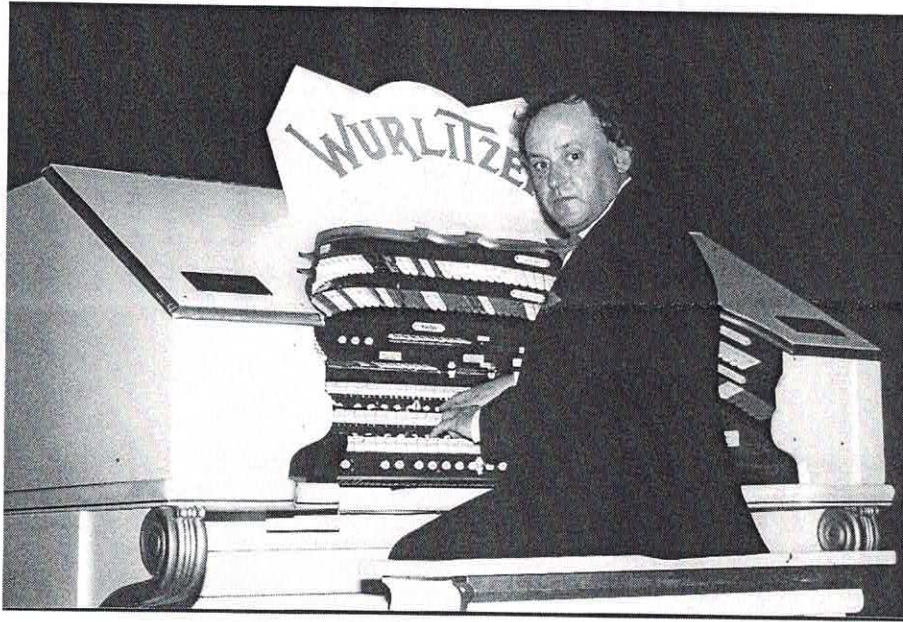
It did not take **David** long to inject some humour into his repartee by introducing his next number, *A Toi*, as composed by the "well-known" **Percy Elliott**, who was recognised by only one member of the audience. However, old **Perc** had at least this one musical achievement to his credit, as the audience soon realised.

A **Fats Waller** bracket followed, played with soft registrations and featured the **Wurlitzer** piano. It finished with *The Joint Is Jumpin'*, played with superb jazz styling, and received sustained applause.

A **South Pacific** selection included *Bali Ha'i* and *I'm Gonna Wash That*

Man Right Outa My Hair, played in tempo to a well controlled drum beat (which in my opinion is not heard enough). *Honey Bun* came next and featured a drum solo, and once again displayed **David's** flair for swing and jazz. A lovely modulation took us into the last song, *This Nearly Was Mine*.

David displayed his

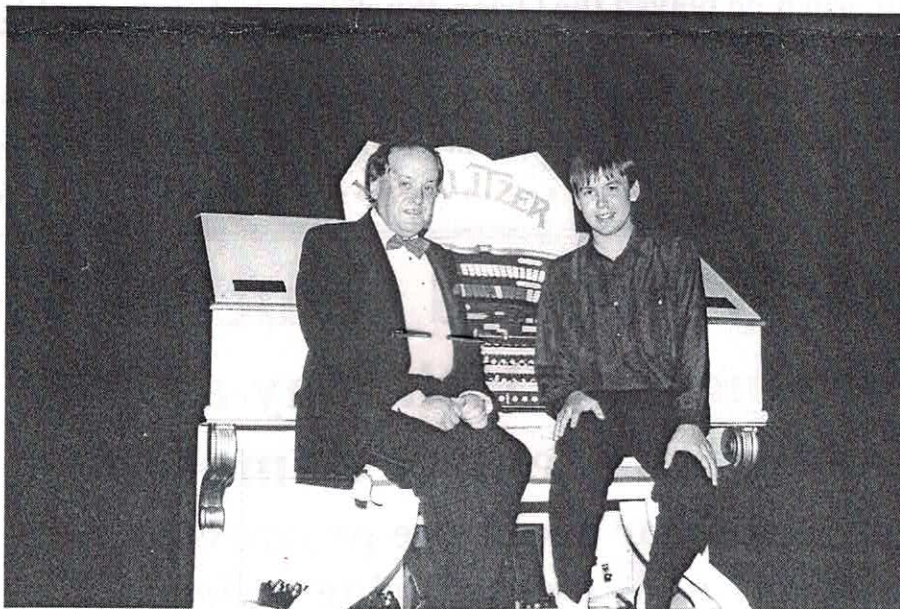


the soulful *I Won't Send Roses*, interval followed.

Manhattan Skyline introduced the second half of the programme and a special tribute to Easter with some appropriate sacred songs, which the audience appreciated. Hits from *Fiddler On The Roof* preceded the premiere on theatre organ of **Lloyd**

the organ that morning. He stunned the audience with a "full on" arrangement of **Gershwin's** immortal *Swanee*. We hope that **Heath** will visit us again in the not too distant future. Thanks **David** for promoting this young talent.

David closed with the blockbuster *Honky Tonk Train*, much to the delight of the audience. Thanks **David** once again for an excellent programme.



A special "thanks" to **John Giacci** who operated the stage lighting, due to the absence of **Miles Perry** who had set up the lights the previous day.

Photography by **Barry Tooker**