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EDITOR.

Chris N. Palmer.  
127 Ernest Street, Crows Nest 2065.  
926-534



# T.O.S.A. NEWS

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

ADDRESS BOX A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000

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Please address all correspondence to: The Secretary, P.O. Box A 584,  
SYDNEY SOUTH. 2000

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE.    Thursday 28th June 1979.    DAVID PARSONS.

Theatre Organ Society Member DAVID PARSONS filled the Concert Hall of the Opera House to overflowing with his lunchtime recital.

I was not there and have not received a report or review from anyone but reports in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' put the attendance at over 3000.

What is significant is that the Concert Hall of the Opera House will only seat 2700, the remainder of the audience both watched and heard the Concert from outside the Concert Hall.

Every member of the Theatre Organ Society congratulates David on giving such a Concert and there is better news to follow.

DAVID PARSONS HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN ASKED TO PLAY THE OPERA HOUSE ORGAN AND WILL GIVE A 'TWILIGHT CONCERT', AT THE OPERA HOUSE ON ~~THURSDAY~~ 7th AUGUST AT 6.15pm till 7.00pm. TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR, \$2.00, (no reserve), AND DAVID HAS BEEN ASKED TO PLAY THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC ON THE INSTRUMENT.

Advice has been received that there will be certain modifications done to the instrument from a tremulant point of view with a view to giving the tremors a bit more depth so that they 'throw' better.

In case anyone did not read up on what specifications have been made available, the instrument is a five manual, 127 speaking stop, 10,500 pipe organ which has aroused a certain amount of controversy since it was first mooted at some years ago.

The inaugural Concert was played by Mr. Douglas Lawrence, from Melbourne, on Thursday 7th June and works included Mozart's "Fantasia", Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor", to name but a few.

The entire Concert was recorded and will be broadcast in its entirety on ABC-FM at some future date.

DON'T FORGET, DAVID PARSONS, OPERA HOUSE, 6.15pm ~~THURSDAY~~ 7th AUGUST.



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PATRON: Ian Davies.

PRESIDENT: Alan Misdale. (525.5554).

VICE PRESIDENTS: Doug Smith. (750-0917), Frank Ellis. (649.7011).

SECRETARY: Ern Vale. (798-6816), TREASURER: Edna Smith. (529-7379).

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Ron Smith. (529-7379), PRACTICE CONVENER: Chris Palmer.

RESEARCH AND ARCHIVES: Ron Cameron. RECORDING ENGINEER: Ray Garret. (869-7247).

DIARY DATES FOR THE BALANCE OF 1979.21st August: Presentation Dinner, Tom and Ann Halloran.

This evening will be held at 'Elim', 83 Shaftsbury Road, Burwood, and is in honour of Tom and Ann Halloran and the highlight of the evening will be the presentation of two specially made badges and the bestowing of Life Membership of the Society.

Any of the members of long standing will know and remember the quiet, persuading, but nevertheless driving force of Tom Halloran without whose efforts our Society would most certainly not be what it is today.

This will be an evening of pleasure and reminiscing about old times and new times and will be a most pleasurable evening.

Prices are \$21.00 Double and \$10.50 single, please check LAST month's issue for booking details.

2nd September: Ron Rhode in Concert, Marrickville Town Hall.

Sunday 2nd September will be a day to remember as Ron Rhode gives the first of his two Concerts.

A booking form is contained in this issue.

This and Ron's other Concert will be the Concert highlights of the Year.

19th September: Ron Rhode in Concert, Marrickville Town Hall.

This will be the second of the Ron Rhode Concerts and will be on Wednesday 19th September at Marrickville Town Hall and will be a different programme to that of the first Concert.

9th October: CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE YEAR 1980.16th October: Tuesday 7.00pm.

Members and friends Club Night at Marrickville Town Hall.

18th November: Sunday, 2.30pm Marrickville Town Hall.

This will be a paid Concert featuring Tony Fenelon and John Atwell.

21st November: Wednesday 8.00pm.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL.

30th November: Friday.

Annual Cabaret, Marrickville Town Hall, further details to be announced in the next issue.

\*ADDITIONAL FUNCTION.Sunday 19th August. Lyceum Theatre, 3.00pm.

ERIC SMITH and KRIS SPIKE will present a Concert at the Lyceum Theatre Complex. Eric will also be presenting the "His Harmony Chorale" in what is called, 'An afternoon with George Gershwin'.

The Lyceum is a Theatre and also a Church and the Theatre Organ that has been installed for many years is a Christie which is in regular use, albeit for mainly Church purposes and this will be one of the few opportunities to hear the instrument in Theatre Styling.



REVIEW. Free Concert, Marrickville Town Hall featuring Margaret Hall, Janice Wilson, Richard James and Noel Smith. Concert held on 24th June.

Review by Ron Smith.

Well, if there ever were any doubts as to the future of Theatre Organ in the modern generation they were certainly dispelled at our free Concert on 24th June when about 280 'faithfulls' came along to support our four artists, Margaret Hall, Janice Wilson, Richard James and Noel Smith. Those people involved with the Miranda Family Organ Club will already be familiar with the ability of these artists in an informal atmosphere and from Marrickville's episode their concert capabilities were made manifest also. The entertainment began with Margaret Hall, whose style is well known through her association, as resident organiste, with Phil Doyle's Mecca Theatre at Kogarah.

Margaret's bright and confident approach to her part of the programme was obvious and must, in part, be attributed to her regular performances before a live audience. Her numbers were well chosen, and I particularly enjoyed her rendition of 'Can't Smile without You' and the 'Merry Widow' selection.

Richard was next at the console and here, certainly, lies an organist for the future. His bracket commenced with a traditional theatre-styled 'Button up your Overcoat' and other highlights for me were 'New York, New York', 'Sound of Music' selection and 'Amazing Grace'. Rick's playing was most expressive and, with the possible exception of the bird whistle employed most of what our 2/11 Wurlitzer has to offer.

The third musician to grace the console was Janice and weeks of worry prior to the concert were unnecessary as exemplified by her part of the programme. Jan has a sensitive style, apparent in her ever-popular arrangement of 'Feelings' and also 'Sing me a Love Song', the latter one, which she wrote herself. Her excellent handling of 'Tenderly' was rewarded by a hearty applause.

Last, but by no means least came Noel and herein lies a musician of great ability, polish and personality. I found it difficult to believe that he first played the pipes only a year ago and in fact probably had about five hours at the console prior to the Concert. He excels at piano also and I hope one day T.O.S.A. will hear him in that capacity. Noel played a very theatrical Horace Weber arrangement of 'Easter Bonnet' and 'California Here I come' and also well received were Noel's arrangements of 'Funny Girl' and 'People'. He is definitely a born showman, having the ability to hold the audience whether talking to or performing for them.

To have sufficiently rewarded these artists financially for their wonderful ability and programme selection, their worried and indeed heartache, would be most difficult, however, in spite of their hours of preparation, they each chose not to accept the fee to which they were entitled. This was an extremely generous gesture on their behalf and is not taken lightly. Some other organists have, in the past, donated their services free of charge and T.O.S.A. does greatly appreciate the fact, particularly on concerts free to the public, where our only source of income is the ever-faithfull Ladies Auxilliary with the teas and the coffees and soft drinks.

To Margaret, Janice, Richard and Noel, Congratulations and thank you for restoring my faith in the future of the Theatre Organ as a median of entertainment and enjoyment.

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THIS ISSUE IS BEING GOT OUT A BIT EARLIER THAN USUAL SO THAT EVERYONE MAY GET THEIR COPY IN TIME FOR DAVID PARSON'S CONCERT AT THE OPERA HOUSE ON 7th AUGUST.  
STRIKES PERMITTING!!



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#### 10 day NORFOLK ISLAND HOLIDAY.

Membership Secretary Ron Smith advises that he still has vacancies for four people, (two couples), on the T.O.S.A excursion to Norfolk Island from October 6th to 16th inclusive.

The all up cost is \$552.00 per person and includes airfares, accommodation, sightseeing tours, dinners and breakfasts and for an extra \$20.00 you can have the lunches thrown in.

Should you be interested, please contact Ron on 529-7379 for reservations or any further information.

#### NEW MEMBERS.

Jim Tulloch, Hurstville. Syd Gambling, Waitara, Kay Smith, Randwick. Peter Anderson, Gosford. Ron Buckley, Dee Why. Gordon and Patti Brown, Watsons Bay. Joe and Prim Overlund, St. Johns Park. Paul Smith, Lewisham. Ron Ivin, Tamworth. Ross and Madge Bongers, Monterey.

May your membership be a happy and long one and we all look forward to seeing you at our functions.

#### HOME ORGAN PARTYS.

Members will have noticed in past issues that we are often asking members if they would consider holding Organ Partys in their homes. To clarify some points that have been raised by various people the following procedures have been formulated:-

##### The Object:

- a. to raise funds for application to T.O.S.A Maintenance, expansion, further instrument purchases and Social functions.
- b. to provide an evening of our common interest entertainment in which we can make new friends and consolidate existing relationships.

##### Required of the Host:

- a. A Venue, suitable for say 30 to 60 people.
- b. an organ, large or small, it doesn't really matter.
- c. somebody to play - not necessarily of the calibre required to play Solo all evening - maybe to 'get the ball rolling' so that others might take the plunge and add their part to the entertainment.

##### Supplied by T.O.S.A:

- a. cups.
- b. teapots.
- c. limited seating.

If you would like to host an Organ Party in your home, please contact Ron Smith for any further details.

#### MARRICKVILLE PRACTICE.

Keyholders of the Wurlitzer will soon be supplied with another key by Alan Misdale.

The key that will be supplied cannot be duplicated by any locksmith and there will only be a limited number of keys made to suit the new barrels.

Please wait until the date is announced before doing anything with your old key as we have to make sure that everyone has one first before swapping over.

Access to the instrument is not a thing to be taken lightly and this is the main reason for the keyswap, it has come under notice that there have been unauthorised duplicates made and used so we hope to put a stop to this practice.



THE STORY OF ROBERT HOPE-JONES.

from S.A. TOSA NEWS 1974.

Robert Hope-Jones was the third son of the late William Hope-Jones, of Hooton Grange, Cheshire, England.

His father, a man of means, was prominent as one of the pioneers in organising the volunteer army of Great Britain. He was musical, playing the cornet and having an unusual Tenor voice. His mother, (Agnes Handforth), was also musical and a gifted singer, she was the daughter of the Rector of Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, a highly nervous woman.

There were nine children of the marriage, two girls and seven boys. Robert appeared on the 9th February, 1850. He inherited in exaggerated degree his mother's highly strung nervous nature. Melancholy, weak and sickly as a child, he was not expected to live. To avoid the damp and cold of English winters he was periodically taken to the south of France. Deemed too delicate for school, a private tutor was provided. Joining in sports or games was out of the question for so sensitive and delicate a youth, so he became a dreamer and a thinker. Too dull for real study, his musical instincts drove him to the pipe organ, and we find him occasionally playing for services at Eastham Parish Church at the age of nine. After his father's death, when Robert was about fourteen, he spent a couple of years in irregular attendance at school, and at the time of his confirmation was persuaded that by superhuman effort of will his physical disabilities might be disregarded and a life of some value worked out. Then began the desperate struggle that gradually overcame every obstruction and resulted in the establishment of an iron will and determination to succeed that no misfortunes were able to quell, except being paid not to work.

When fifteen he became voluntary organist and choir-master to the Birkenhead School Chapel. Two or three years later he simultaneously held a similar office at St. Luke's Church, Tranmere, where he trained a boy choir and became widely celebrated. For this Church he bought and set up a fine organ. He subsequently served as Churchwarden and was active in many other Church offices. He erected a pipe organ in the Claughton Music Hall and organised and conducted oratorio performances in aid of various Church funds, training a large voluntary chorus and orchestra for the purpose. He composed music for several of the psalms, canticles, Kyries and other music for the services of the Church. Hope-Jones enthusiasm knew no bounds and he had the knack of imparting to those who worked under him.

So earnest and energetic was this young man that in spite of indifferent health and without once resigning his work at St. Luke's, he became choirmaster and honorary organist at St. John's, Birkenhead, doing similar work in connection with that Church, and in connection with this organ that Hope-Jones did his first great work in connection with organ building. The improved electric action, moveable console, and many other matters destined to startle the organ world were devised and made by him there, after the days business and the evenings choir rehearsals. He had the voluntary help from enthusiastic choirmen and boys, who worked far into the night, on some occasions all night. Later some of these people were to occupy responsible positions in the Hope-Jones Organ Company.

All this merely formed occupation for his spare time. About the age of 17 he began his business career. He was bound apprentice to the large firm of Laird Bros., Engineers and shipbuilders, Birkenhead, England. He worked in the engineering shop, and the drawing office, and the chief electrician of the Lancashire and Cheshire (National) Telephone Company. In connection with telephony he invented a multitude of improvements, some of which are in universal use.

continued next page.



He devised a method for increasing the power of the human voice, through the application of a 'relay' furnished with compressed air. The principle was used in the best phonographs and other voice producing machines.

He also invented the 'Diaphone', still used by the Canadian Government for its fog signal stations and declared to be the most powerful producer of musical sound known. A modified form was adapted for the Church organ.

About 1889 he resigned his connection with the telephone company in order that he might devote a greater part of his attention to the improvement of the church organ, a subject which, as we have seen, was beginning to occupy much of his spare time. He had a private practice as a consulting engineer, but gradually the hobby crowded out all other employment, much to his financial disadvantage, and to the gain of the musical world.

His pipe organ at St. John's Birkenhead became famous. It was visited by thousands of music lovers from all parts of the world. Organs built on St. John's model were ordered for America, India, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, France, Germany, Malta and for numbers of English Cathedrals, churches, town halls, etc.,.

NOTHING WAS SPENT ON ADVERTISING. The English musical press for years devoted columns to somewhat heated discussion of Hope-Jones epoch making inventions, and echoes appeared in the musical periodicals of many other countries. In spite of every form of opposition, and in spite of serious financial difficulties, Hope-Jones built organs that have influenced the art in all parts of the globe. He proved himself a prolific inventor and can justly claim as his work nine tenths of the improvements made in the organ during the years 1885 to 1910. He has been called "the greatest mind engaged in the art of organ building in this or any other age".

At first Hope-Jones licensed a score of organ builders to carry out his inventions, but as this proved unsatisfactory, he entered the field as an organ builder himself, being liberally supported by Mr Thomas Threlfall, chairman of the Royal Academy of Music; J. Martin White, Member of the British Parliament, and other friends.

It was, perhaps, too much to expect that those who had so far profited from Hope-Jones contracts and work should remain favourably disposed when he became a rival and competitor.

For nearly twenty years he met concerted opposition that would have crushed any ordinary man, attacks in turn against his electrical knowledge, musical taste, voicing ability, financial standing, and personal character. Many of his friends remained his greatest supporters, men from his town.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH. (promise).

I have had the above article stashed away to bring to you for quite some time, I had hoped to bring it in one hit, but we are trying to get this issue out rather quickly owing to the David Parsons Concert on 7th August and also the fact that there is a Postal Strike on at the moment we are trying to rush it out to you.

I, as Editor, believe that all articles should be printed in one issue for several reasons one being that all the article is there when you read it and when the rest is published at some other stage you don't have to go trying to find last month's issue to get it together again.

Bye for now and see you at the Opera House on 7th August.