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February 1980

TOSA NEWS

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SYDNEY HOSTS

NOTABLE NINTH

NATIONAL CONVENTION

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

ADDRESS BOX A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000

REGISTERED FOR POSTING AS A PERIODICAL—CATEGORY B

N.S.W. ARE PROUD TO BE THE VENUE FOR THIS CONVENTION TO BE HELD FROM FRIDAY 4TH TO MONDAY 7TH APRIL, 1980 INCLUSIVE. BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN, SO HURRY AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PACKAGE PRICE AS SHOWN IN BROCHURE IN JANUARY ISSUE OF T.O.S.A.

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DIRECTORY

PATRON: Ian Davies PRESIDENT: Alan Misdale (525.5554)
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RESEARCH AND ARCHIVES: Ian Cameron. RECORDING ENGINEER: Ray Garrett.
EDITOR: Jack Lawson (569.3775).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY 3RD: Home Party at Ron & Phyl Wilson's, 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba. Once again Ron & Phyl have thrown their home open to members. Starting at 3.30 p.m., these home parties always prove to be very popular because not only do the Wilson's have a nice Lowrey Organ and a piano they have a large in ground swimming pool.

THINGS TO BRING

Swimming costumes, meat for barbecue tea, your liquid refreshments. Salads will be provided. Book now by phoning 759.6050. Cost per member \$2.00

SUNDAY 24th FEBRUARY: MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL, 2.30 P.M.

Our Patron Mr Ian Davies, opens what promises to be a wonderful musical year with a concert on our 2/11 WURLITZER. This should be an interesting concert as it will be the first recital following the organ being closed down since December for overhaul ... ADMISSION FREE

TUESDAY 18th MARCH: MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL, 7.30 P.M.

CLUB NIGHT ... The first of the series of these nights to be held during 1980 where members and friends meet in an informal gathering to play and listen to our organ. Supper will be served by the ladies during the evening, so roll up with your friends and enjoy this free and easy night.

SATURDAY 29th MARCH: HOME PARTY 8.00 P.M.

Arthur and Dorothy Cammell again invite members to an evening of organ entertainment at 63 Johnstone Street, Peakhurst on their THOMAS CELEBRITY MODEL 821. The artist is Raymond Turner, this young gentleman is only 18 years of age and has quite a list of achievements to his credit. Some of which I list below:
YAMAHA Compétition

1977	PARRAMATTA AREA	Jnr. section 15 years	1st place
"	"	" 14 - 16 Years	" "
1978	"	" 14 - 16 Years	" "
1979	"	" 20 years and under	" "
"	"	" Best orchestration	" "
"	"	" Senior section	" "
"	CITY OF SYDNEY	EISTEDDFORD Classical Section	95 marks, (Highest ever awarded)
"	"	"	Light popular (own arrangement) 2nd place.

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It can be seen from the preceeding that this is a talent not to be missed, as accommodation is limited to 60. Book early by phoning on 53.9891. Admission Gents \$2.50, Ladies \$1.50 plus a plate. All proceeds go to T.O.S.A.

FRIDAY 4TH TO MONDAY 7TH APRIL: SYDNEY

N.S.W. Division is host to the "NOTABLE NINTH" National Convention. See attached brochure for full details and then book early as some venues have limited numbers and we would not want you to miss out.

SUNDAY 18TH MAY: MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL 2.30 P.M.

Member DAVID PARSONS will be featured on the Ex Prince Edward WURLITZER. David is no stranger to this organ, and has played two recitals on the Opera House organ, these were of music in the lighter vein to show the organs versatility, and were played to capacity houses. He is church organist at St. Mathews Church of England West Pennant Hills, and has the rare distinction of having produced a record on the Marrickville organ.

So come along for a rewarding afternoon of organ entertainment.

ADMISSION: Adults \$4.00, Members \$3.00, Pensioners & Children \$2.00

FRIDAY 6th JUNE: MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL 6.45 P.M.

This is the date of our mid year cabaret. So keep it free. Full details will be published later.

EDITORIAL

The Committee have selected me as your editor for 1980. When I take on this position I look back over the past years and find I have some fairly big shoes to fill, but I hope with your support to be able to turn out a magazine which will be both informative and interesting to all members young and old.

Please remember it is your Society and your magazine so tell me what you would like to see in print or if you have an article which would be of interest to members send it to me for inclusion.

I look forward to being your communications officer during 1980.

Organically yours,

Jack Lawson.

NEW MEMBERS: We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Mrs Glad Chuck, Caringbah, Mr Ernest Tree, Killara, Eden & Jeanette Joseph, Killarney Heights, Mr & Mrs W. Easdown, Bega, Mr John Dannevig, Wiley Park, and look forward to meeting you at our coming functions.

WALTER STRONY

"Notable Ninth Convention" Featured Artist, Walter Strony, was born in 1955, about the time theatre pipe organs began their renaissance. Since beginning music studies at age seven, he has studied organ with Dr Herbert White, and Karel Paukert, formerly of Northwestern University, and piano with Guilio Favario, associate conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. His theatre organ instructor was the late Al Melgard, who for 45 years was master of the six-manual sixty two rank Barton Organ in the Chicago Stadium.

Since his debut at the age of 18, Walter has appeared before audiences throughout the U.S.A., and was featured for three months at Expo '75 in Japan.

Following the restoration of the Chicago Theatre's Wurlitzer, once played by the immortal Jesse Crawford, Walter has been closely associated with that instrument. In fact, he has been frequently on the payroll of the theatre, the first organist hired there in 25 years. His first recording "Walter Strony plays the Chicago Theatre Wurlitzer" was made on this famous instrument.

Walter was featured organist at Pipe Organ Pizza in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where his engagement was highly acclaimed, prior to taking up the position at The Organ Stop Pizza, Phoenix, Arizona.

Even at the age of 25, Walter Strony brings a wealth of experience to the console, and is proving himself to be a young master of the theatre organ. We are confident that you will enjoy Walter's only performance of this Australian Tour at the famous Marrickville Wurlitzer.

AN INTERVIEW WITH SIDNEY TORCH

In the 1930's the music of the theatre organ was a most important part of the entertainment provided at any large cinema located in the city. The scene in England at this time was much more extensive than that in Australia, most towns of any size supporting at least one or more organ equipped cinemas - in London most suburbs had organs in their major cinemas. The B.B.C. made regular theatre organ broadcasts, sometimes on a daily basis or even more often! Theatre organ recordings (the old 78 R.P.M. versions) were top sellers and no self respecting record dealer would be without a good stock of records of local or national broadcast favourites.

The names in Britain which towered above the rest were:- Reginald Foort and Quentin Maclean (noted for their orchestral transcriptions) and Sidney Torch and Henry Croudson (noted for their up-tempo jazz stylings). Of these four men two are now deceased (Maclean and Croudson) Foort lives in retirement in Florida, U.S.A. having played theatre organ until 1978. Torch still lives in England, having retired from his career in 1972. Of these four artists much mystery has previously surrounded the theatre organ career of Sidney Torch. Torch began playing theatre organ in the early 30's and played up until 1940, after the War he became a most distinguished orchestral conductor, composer and arranger. It is generally acknowledged that Torch's style on the Theatre Organ was without equal in the field of Jazz playing.

Back in 1972, Doric Recordings Inc. of U.S.A. undertook to re-release 24 titles recorded by Torch during the 1930's. These recordings in the original 78 form have been eagerly sort by record collectors in England, Australia and the U.S.A.

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A double album was assembled by Doric of the best Columbia 78's, and the cover gives a wealth of information on the five instruments on which the tracks were recorded.

Prior to the release of the Doric album the Managing Director of Doric Records Frank Killinger, in company with Judd Walton (well known California theatre organ authority and American Theatre Organ Society Director) sort and was granted an interview with the famous Sidney Torch on a subject of which he had hardly spoken in the last 30 years - his theatre organ career. The interview was taped, and with Mr. Torch's permission was printed in Theatre Organ Magazine. No attempt was made to soften the opinions of Sidney Torch when tapes were transcribed for the article. Judd Walton described Sidney Torch as "an absolutely delightful gentleman of the old school; thoughtful, witty and thoroughly conversant on musicianship and artistry, both classical and popular."

Whilst it is now some years since this interview was taken, many of the points made are equally relevant now as they were then. The Interview will appear in T.O.S.A. News in three consecutive monthly parts. It is hoped that in next month's issue we will also give a record review of this double album which will be available again at the T.O.S.A. Record Shop during the Easter Convention. We wish to thank the publishers of Theatre Organ for permission to reprint articles from their fine magazine.

T.O.S.A. LIBRARY

The following books are owned by this Division and are available to members on loan. They contain much valuable information on Theatre Organs, Theatres and Organists from around the world. The books are available from the Editor J. Lawson, 569.3775.

WURLITZER FACTORY PHOTO ALBUM

THE CINEMA ORGAN by REGINALD FOORT

MR BLACKPOOL - REGINALD DIXON by PETER ASHMAN

AT THE MIGHTY ORGAN by GEOFFREY WYATT

FROM PIANO TO THEATRE PIPE ORGAN by BERNARD BARNES

WURLITZER CHURCH ORGANS A WURLITZER PUBLICATION

WURLITZER THEATRE PIPE ORGAN FACT BOOK, WURLITZER PUBLICATION

LINK UNIT ORGANS, LINK PUBLICATION

MARR & COLTON, AMERICA'S FINEST ORGAN

KILGEN WONDER ORGAN

WURLITZER UNIT ORGANS, WURLITZER PUBLICATION

THE WORLD'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT IN MUSIC FOR THEATRES, WURLITZER

PICTURE PALACE ARCHITECTURE IN AUSTRALIA by ROSS THORNE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE MOVIE PALACE by BEN M. HALL

This last book is a new release of the famous best remaining seats by BEN M. HALL.

In this and following issues will appear a Personal Column any member having any items of a personal nature which will be of interest to members, please forward same to me or phone them in.

The following article supplied by Archives Officer Ian Cameron. Deals with some of the Ladies who graced the organ benches in Yesteryears. Their photos appear elsewhere in this issue.

BETTY GOULD

Photograph 1

Born in Michigan (USA), she began playing piano as soon as she could reach the keys, and after some two years of lessons, nearly drove her teacher to distraction at the ease with which she played. At the age of eleven, Betty began accompanying vaudeville acts in Midland, Michigan. Two years later, she visited the 'Strand' Detroit with her sister and was stunned by the effects and sound of the Hope-Jones organ being played by Eddie Benedict.

However, her organ debut was not to come just yet, and for some time still, Betty toured as a pianist playing, among other things, for silent movies. She finally accepted a position playing a 'Bartola' in Minneapolis-St Paul, and obtained her first real 'theatre organ' job at the 'Oxford' Theatre on 3/8 Barton. Following appearances at several other theatres, she landed a one-year contract to play the 'Strand', the organ she had idolised as a youngster. In 'Orchestra Review' of March 1926, it says "... she comes as close to being a genius as is possible in her special art."

Betty was later appointed at the 'Oriental' in Chicago, and provided relief for regular organists at many other theatres whilst they took supper breaks. At one stage, she was playing four theatres and doing about 20 minutes at each. More prestigious jobs were still to come, and in early 1929, Betty did the morning recitals at the St Louis 'Fox', a 4/36 Wurlitzer, and throughout the day on the Lobby 3/13 Moller. The Fox chain later appointed her to the Brooklyn 'Fox', a 4/37 Wurlitzer.

In the Fall of 1930, she was hired for the opening of the Stapleton 'Paramount' twin-console organ, a 3/3/19 Wurlitzer. Her partner was Priscilla Holbrook, who was given the name 'Jean' and they were billed simply as 'Betty and Jean'. Betty left the 'Paramount' in 1931 due to illness. As the Depression hit the country, musicians took whatever jobs were offering, and at this time, Betty took over at the 'Beacon' Theatre in New York (4/19 Wurlitzer). In late 1932 she was asked by the great S.L. Rothafel ('Roxy') to open the 4/34 Wurlitzer in the new RKO 'Roxy' Theatre in the Rockefeller Centre. During 1934, Betty Gould started general organ work on the WMCA Studio Wurlitzer (a 2/7 organ) and soon had her own very popular morning show 'Sing something simple'. She later took over the morning Show 'Morning Reveries' from Fred Fiebel at Columbia Broadcasting playing the 'Paramount' 4/21 Wurlitzer, and then returned to WMCA. She was billed as 'Radio's Princess of the Console', during her WMCA appointment.

In the late 30's she demonstrated Hammond organs for the Knabe Company, and did some hotel work on these instruments in the 1940's. She suffered an illness in 1949, and moved west for her health. During the 1950's Betty accepted many engagements on pipe and electronic instruments. Never willing to retire, she has a Hammond in her home and plays a variety of jobs.

Source: Condensed from an article in 'Theatre Organ' by Ron Rhode and Karl Warner Vol. 17 No. 2 April 1975.

Editorial note: Betty now plays luncheon sessions at the Organ Stop, Phoenix.

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DORIS HAVENS Photograph 2

Doris Havens is remembered for her performances at the 'Boyd' Theatre in Philadelphia (USA). Here she played the 3/19 Kimball (Opus 7050) during the 1930's, and regularly broadcast over station WCAU. Esther Higgins also played the 'Boyd' Kimball during this era, and played the final concert in 1969, before the instrument was purchased for re-installation in the John Dickinson High School, where it is being enlarged to 34 ranks.

Doris Havens at the 'Boyd' Kimball when the organ was regularly broadcast over station WCAU (1934-35).

Photograph from 'The Console' - April 1970.

MURIEL JEAVONS Photograph 3

Miss Jeavons started her musical career with piano lessons from Phillip Dunn, in Sydney, followed by organ tuition by G. Faunce Allman and W.T. Beckett. She studied theatre organ under Horace Weber and obtained an appointment at the 'Melba' Strathfield, where she shared the console with three other well-known lady organists, Jean Penhall, Carmen Bowman and Ann Holmes.

She was later featured at the 'Arcadia' Chatswood, 'Palatial' Burwood, 'Roxy' Parramatta, 'Savoy' Enfield and Hurstville, 'Regent' Wentworthville, 'Victory' Kogarah and 'Kings' Gordon. As well as having gained wide experience and acclaim on the suburban circuit, Miss Jeavons also appeared at several city theatres, including the 'Lyceum' and 'Plaza', and often gave recitals on the Sydney Town Hall organ.

Muriel Jeavons at the 'Arcadia' Chatswood console, 1947. (Photograph from 'The Story of the 'Arcadia' Theatre Chatswood', by Ian C. Griggs, 1972.)

BETTY MITCHELL Photograph 4

Miss Mitchell's first appointment was as relief organist for the Philpot Circuit in Coventry, England. In 1937, she toured as relief and held various appointments at the 'Plaza', 'Forum', 'Rex' and 'Savoy' Theatres in that city. She resigned from the chain in 1940, and was appointed at the 'Commodore' Slough, where she remained until late 1941, when she was engaged as organist and Manageress of the 'Regal' West Norwood.

In July 1944, the 'Regal' closed due to enemy action, and Betty Mitchell was appointed to the 'Regal' Edmonton and played the 4/14 Christie, made famous on earlier recordings by Sydney Torch. In 1945, she transferred to the 'Troxy' Theatre, in Stepney.

Betty Mitchell at the console of the 3/8 Conacher - 'Forum' Theatre, Coventry. (This organ was opened by Reginald Foort in 1934).

Photograph and notes from 'Memoirs of the Theatre Organ' by Michael Donald, and 'Theatre Organ World' by Jack Courtney.

IRIS NORNGROVE Photograph 5

Iris Norgrove was born in Auckland, New Zealand, and as a child, worshipped the organists at the 'Civic' Theatre in that city, and an ambition grew that one day she would be featured at that Wurlitzer playing to the people. She learnt piano and organ from Thea Ryan. During this time, she constantly sought approval from the management of the theatre to allow her to play the organ, but to no avail. She was then 13 years old.

Many years later, the theatre changed management and Iris approached the Manager and stated that she wished to sing and play at the organ. He told her that the Directors were looking for just such an act and that one of the Directors had gone to Sydney in search of such an organist. It was promised that if none was found, she would be offered the post.

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Miss Norgrove undertook further study of the organ under Ewart Lyne, and some months later, was auditioned for the post at the 'Civic'. She won the position and played at the 'Civic' for a record period of time. After a short spell, she took over at the console of the 'State' Theatre in Melbourne. Miss Norgrove's act is to sing as well as playing her own accompaniment on the organ, in English, German, French, Italian, Maori and Latin. In this, she is unique in the world. A driving ambition made this woman a great artiste, who really deserves her success. She did an LP for the Planet label in the mid-1950's at the 'State' Wurlitzer, featuring a selection of Scottish tunes. Iris Norgrove at the 'State Melbourne Wurlitzer.

PERSONAL COLUMN

News has just been received that Narelle the wife of Ian McIver the author of Mac's Spot has given birth to a Daughter on 28.12.79, weight 9lb 6½ oz. To be called FERN ALICE ELIZABETH. Our congratulations to the proud parents and I imagine when things return to normal at the McIvers further editions of Mac's Spot will appear.

It is with regret that we announce the passing of member DEREK ABBOT and offer our deepest sympathy to the family.

My wife Pearl would like to thank all those members who rang or inquired about her condition following the unfortunate fall she had at Marrickville Town Hall on the evening of the Christmas cabaret. Following a week in Marrickville Hospital and a period of convalescing at her daughters home. She would like all to know that she is now home again and is able to get around fairly well.

Jack Lawson.

CONVENTION INFORMATION.. INTERSTATE EDITORS PLEASE COPY FOR MEMBERS GUIDANCE.

The opening session of the Notable Ninth Convention to be held at Willoughby Civic Centre, 411 Victoria Ave, Chatswood.

Conventioneers travelling by train should catch Hornsby train Via Sydney Harbour bridge (North Shore line) and alight at Chatswood station and leave platform on the right hand or eastern side, the Civic Centre is only a block down on left side of road.

Those coming by road should travel via Pacific Highway, turn right into Victoria Ave, turning left at Railway Street, turn right under railway bridge one block along and turn left then right and then you will be at car park at rear of Civic Centre.

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CONCERT REVIEW

by CLIFF BINGHAM

Sunday November 18th, 1979, saw a capacity Marrickville crowd enjoy a great afternoon of musical entertainment, when Tony Fenelon and John Atwell unleashed their musical talents upon a "suspecting" audience.

The programme opener was a "whoopie" version of "Ivory Rag" (with a very energetic J.A. doubling on organ and piano while Tony played the piano lead) that had the audience really jumping.

The first half of the concert was well varied with solo organ brackets from both players and two duo selections. Tony's solos included a beautifully registered "I only have eyes for You", and a rip-roaring "Take the A-train". John's selection included a "goonish" "Crazy Rhythm" and a sparkling "Bluesette".

The crowd, however much it enjoyed the solos, had definitely come for the organ and piano duets. (Thanks to Noel Smith for the beautiful 7'6" ebony Yamaha grand). The first half duets were more the "easy-listening" type and included "Sing", "Doll Dance" and "Yellow Bird". These songs do have a tendency towards being hackneyed but the standard of Tony and John's arrangements and playing ensured their success.

The second half opened with a spirited "Knightsbridge March" from John followed by a christmas medley. Tony's second half solos featured "What kind of Fool am I" a superbly arranged medley of "I'm Gonna sit right down and write Myself a Letter" and "Lady be good", and "Waltz of the Flowers".

The duets in the second half were really something, the hauntingly beautiful "Variations on a theme of Paganini" by Rachmaninov was a real highlight - I've never heard it played better. The finale was excerpts from all movements of the Tchaikowsky B^b minor piano concerto - magnificently arranged and presented.

The encores included another old favourite played as only these boys can play it - "Dream of Olwen".

A tremendous concert and a great finale to the Society's 1979 concert series. To T.F. and J.A. - Congratulations and thanks.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

The owners of the former Roxy Christie Organ are currently experiencing a problem in relation to the storage of theatre organ components. They urgently need dry storage facilities to accommodate parts to the tune of about ½ a normal garage. Members who may be able to assist in this matter are asked to contact Robert Gliddon at 869.2083.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members are advised that 1980 subscriptions are overdue and unless paid immediately this will definitely be the last issue of T.O.S.A. News unfinancial members will receive. Please complete renewal form at back of this issue and forward to Membership Secretary.