

t.o.s.a. news

incorporating **THE DIAPHONE**

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

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WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

Wednesday, 17th October, 8 p.m. in the Sydney Town Hall, our big annual Organ Spectacular, which promises to be one of the most interesting and entertaining spectaculars ever held. Several new brands of organs will be featured along with some new organists we have not previously heard. The following list will surely whet the appetites of all our members -

1. Kentucky Organ from F. Payton and Son, played by Len Thomas.
2. Lowrey Organ from Rees Wills played by Ray Thornby.
3. Gulbransen Organ from Dynamic Musical Enterprises played by Ian Davies.
4. Thomas Organ from Winton Music Centre played by Cliff Bingham.
5. Wurlitzer Organ from Wadsworth-Stamford played by Peter Held.
6. Yamaha Organ from Rose Music played by Peter Derz.

Such a lineup of organ talent surely deserves the utmost support from our membership, so bring yourselves, your families, and your friends and let's pack the Town Hall to capacity. Our compere for the evening is television personality and TOSA member, James Dibble. Admission is by program, so don't miss this veritable organ feast.

Registered with the G. P. O. for posting as a periodical - Category B

Wednesday, 24th October, 8 p.m. Cliff Bingham in concert at Chatswood Town Hall. This is the first full concert to feature Cliff on this organ and promises to be a real good night of entertaining organ music. This concert is being featured as part of the North Side Arts Festival Week and will be advertised in the local press as such. There will be an associate artist (probably a singer) and, judging from the care with which Cliff selects his associate artists, we are in for a grand night of musical entertainment. Admission is \$1.50 for adults, members \$1.00, special concessions for pensioners and children.

Sunday, 14th October, 8 p.m. MOVIE NIGHT FOR RAILWAY FANS. Member, Norm Read, will be showing some of his vast collection of movies on NEW SOUTH WALES RAILWAYS at 23 Selwyn Street, Paddington. Due to advanced advertising this evening has been already booked out, however Norm has offered to show the same programme the following Sunday night, OCTOBER 21st, for those who have missed out on the first evening. Please ring 31 8883 NOW and book your seat if you are interested in railways, an evening with a difference. Admission is \$1, for the Capitol Organ Fund.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday, 21st November, at 8 p.m. An ORGAN PARTY will be held at the home of Ritchie Willis and Norm Read, 23 Selwyn Street, Paddington, Phone 31 8883. Their GUEST ORGANIST will be OUR POPULAR PATRON, IAN DAVIES, at the console of the Thomas Lawrence Welk Organ. Admission will be \$1, with the proceeds going to the Capitol Organ Fund. As seating is limited to 25, please ring 31 8883 NOW and reserve your seat.

28th November. Marrickville Town Hall. The fifth anniversary concert celebrating the opening of our Wurlitzer will feature David Parsons.

17th November. Record and tape night at Barry and Pam Tooker's.

1st December. TOSA Christmas Party in the Landsdowne Room, Bankstown Civic Centre. Numbers are limited to 180 and the cost is \$5 per head (\$10 double). See coupon at the back of this issue. Don't delay, send in your coupon and money NOW! First in, best dressed.

he had just presented a concert, which by any standards, could only be described as brilliant, and secondly, he had silenced the mockers and knockers who had belittled the organ and even informed him that it would be musical suicide for him to play it. In spite of such gloomy predictions, Vic Hammett, I'm glad to say, is alive and well and now back home in England, and if he should feel like proudly saying, "I Did It My Way", then why not indeed?

Tumultuous applause, at the end of his concert, ensured an encore, but before doing so, Vic told his audience that he had been advised by organists, both interstate and local, that to play the Chatswood Wurlitzer would be "musical suicide". He also said that following his Marrickville concert five weeks earlier, he had decided to try the Chatswood organ himself before passing judgment on it, and after trying the organ he had agreed to play it in concert if TOSA would rectify faults which he had listed. He went on to say that the TOSA Maintenance Group had done even more than he had asked for and that it was very obvious that his judgment had been right. Audience reaction to his remarks left no doubt on that score.

The concert began with an exciting "Neapolitan Fiesta", full of warmth and color, and brimful with familiar and well loved melodies. Then came a lush yet delicately shaded "Bird Songs at Eventide" of which even Eric Coates would have approved, followed by "The Waltz of Love" by Tolchard Evans and "The Lady from Alicante". Vic then took his place at the Steinway to present "Piano Playtime", a pot-pourri of Gershwin music which revealed the "other side of Hammett" - a side which hitherto had been unknown to us in N. S. W. except by repute. Imaginatively arranged, and flawlessly performed, it was a real crowd pleaser.

Nostalgia took over as Vic returned to the console with a presentation of "The Romantic Melodies of Ray Noble" and what wonderful memories he evoked with such favorites as "Cherokee", "I'll Do My Best to Make You Happy", "By The Fireside", "Goodnight Sweetheart", "Love Walked In" and "Love Is The Sweetest Thing". Registrations in this bracket were superb and the organ was shown to be much more orchestral than many had imagined. Finally, Giraud's "Minuet and Toccata" brought us to the half way mark and interval.

After the break, an exuberant Vic Hammett returned to the console and immediately got "Back In The Old Routine" with "Charleston", "Perfidia",

AROUND AND ABOUT

Congratulations to Victoria's "VOX" editor Julien Arnold and his wife Barbara on the arrival of a daughter at the end of August.

Wanted. One theatre-type organ console (horseshoe), condition immaterial but with stop keys and keyboards intact. If you have a spare one or an unwanted one lying around, phone Ray Thornley on 520-9955 with particulars and price.

Ray, incidentally tells me that the Kogarah "Mecca" Theatre is doing good business and that the organ is featured by Ray on Friday and Saturday nights. The "Mecca" specialises in big-name double features so that you are really assured of getting your money's worth.

For Sale. Two spotlights with lenses (no globes) \$25 each.
One 10 watt solid state stereo amplifier \$30.
Phone John Weismantel or 80-2680 between 6 and 8 p.m.

Eric Smith tells us that a repeat showing of the recent silent movie night featuring "Phantom of the Opera" will be on Wednesday, 17th October, at the Lyceum Theatre.

A correction to an item in last month's TOSA NEWS re theatre organ broadcasts. The ABC are just featuring snippets from Malcolm Patterson's Adelaide organ program. However, if you want to hear the entire program, and you can pick up Adelaide late on Sunday nights, it is featured on Adelaide ABC radio between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. E. S. T.

At Richie Willis' recent organ party, David Parsons plays a half and half program (half his choice, half requests) and raised a further \$25 for the Capitol Organ Fund. Many thanks again, Richie and Norm.

Word in from Perth that the Metro Theatre is to close. No news as to the fate of the 2/12 Wurlitzer yet.

VICTORIOUS HAMMETT AGAIN!!

Following his concert at Chatswood Town Hall on Friday, 24th August, Vic Hammett left Sydney victoriously, and with good reason. Firstly,

"Who's Sorry Now", "Glad Rag Doll", "A Beautiful Friendship", "Rockabye", and "Sweet Georgia Brown". It may have been the "old routine" for Vic, but for the audience it was "happy days are here again" musically speaking. Another "Piano Playtime" found Vic stroking the Steinway to the music of Irving Berlin and this was as enjoyable as the Gershwin offering had been. The final item, "Richard Rodgers On Parade" introduced, "Mountain Greenery", "Small Hotel", "Falling In Love With Love", "Manhattan", "Surry With The Fringe On Top" and a breath-taking "You'll Never Walk Alone" into which "I'll Walk Beside You" had been excitingly woven.

I believe this to have been possibly one of the most memorable concerts Vic has yet presented in N. S. W., and the endorsement of the organ by such an able and experienced theatre-pipe organist as Mr. Hammett must dispel any doubts about the Wurlitzer organ installation in the Chatswood Town Hall.

The mutual respect and co-operation between Willoughby Council and TOSA will ensure a continuing improvement in the performance of the organ until a "mint" condition has been achieved. The Society gratefully thanks the dedicated members who spent long hours working on the Wurlitzer - Vic's confidence in their ability to improve the instrument must have afforded them immense pride and satisfaction in a job well done.

Following the concert, members gathered in the foyer for a farewell supper for Mr. Hammett. The excellent fare on the tables was provided by the hard working ladies Committee, to whom we extend our thanks also. And so Vic Hammett's 1973 tour ended VICToriously.

Frank Ellis.

TONY FENELON - ON HIS WAY

One of the most difficult situations to avoid when reviewing a concert (particularly a Tony Fenelon concert) is the use of the same adjectives over again. This problem is even further complicated by the fact that this was Tony's second Marrickville concert for TOSA in recent months. Thus, one is faced with two alternatives; either to write the same review again and just change the names, or to approach the concert from an entirely different angle. It is this second method the writer has adopted.

Let me say now that I intend to judge this concert on international standards, i. e., the same standards by which I would judge a Peter Nero or Lyn Larsen concert.

Tony opened his program with a toe-tapper from "Paint Your Wagon" entitled "I'm On My Way" and followed up with the "National Emblem March" which left his capacity audience in no doubt as to where he was "on his way". Then followed two numbers that were, for this writer, the highlights of the program. The first, a beautiful ballad Called "Two Different Worlds", featured some adroit left-hand, second-touch melody doubling. The second was the late Buddy Cole's magnificent arrangement of "Autumn Nocturne, with its exquisite chords and tremors-off registrations providing tone clusters previously unheard at Marrickville Town Hall. These two numbers provided further evidence that this artist is just so far ahead of any of his Australian contemporaries. My only disappointment with the program is that it contained too few of this more modern type of number.

A stirring theme from "The High and the Mighty" was followed by Strauss' "Radeztsky March" bringing all the gaiety of Vienna to us. A wistful presentation of "September in the Rain" preceded the awful majesty of the theme from "2001, A Space Odyssey" incorporating the complete arrangement of the "Blue Danube" waltz. The final item before interval was a dazzling arrangement of "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." Tony's technique and registrations combined perfectly to bring to the audience Richard Rogers' magnificent sound picture.

After intermission (again, many thanks to the hard workers on the refreshment stand) "When You're Smiling" was the number Tony used to bring to us the mood of the second half. Strauss' "Perpetual Motion" a novelty number built around a four-chord structure was saved from any monotony by the skilful use of light and varied registration. "Three Coins in the Fountain" (shades of Melbourne Regent) preceded a cute little ballad which Tony played for his wife, Kaye, "Eriskay Love Lilt". A "Fantasy in Concerto" featuring themes by Tchaikowsky, Chopin and Greig gave us ample demonstration of Tony's extensive classical piano training. The "Dambusters' March" and a medley of Hawaiian music followed by the final number in the program, "American Patrol" gave us the clue that Tony's theme for the afternoon was aviation and travel. Very appropriate too as he embarks on his third U. S. tour.

After such a banquet of organ music, the wildly enthusiastic audience

demanded two encores and Tony responded with 'Swanee' (from his latest Festival Record,* which incidentally was on sale at the concert) and 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco'.

For at least a half-hour following the concert Tony contracted writer's cramp signing copies of the record. If you didn't get your special pre-release copy at the concert, dive into your favorite record bar and get it today - it's a beauty!

Congratulations Tony, on your presentation and execution of the best concert we have ever heard at Marrickville Town Hall.

Best wishes also for a successful third American tour.

SYD SPENCE IN ENGLAND

The Editor, T. O. S. A. News.

I note our president Tom Halloran and his wife have gone for a world tour and hope to see many overseas theatre organs. Having myself just returned from a 12 weeks visit to U.K., I'm sure they will find, as I did, overwhelming hospitality awaiting them from members of our counterpart C. O. S. - the Cinema Organ Society, of which I've been a member for several years.

It was my good fortune to be present at London's farewell to "Mr. Blackpool" - Reg. Dixon - who played the 5-manual Compton at the Odeon Theatre, Leicester Square, to a packed audience who had come from all over Britain, plus coach loads of admirers from Holland. Incidentally, this organ is the last one still regularly featured in London, the resident organist being Gerald Shaw.

The highlight for me was to be present at the first and only appearance in London of that great American George Wright. Arranged by Conn, he played on stage at the Granada Theatre, Tooting, the instrument being a 3-manual Conn 650, connected up to a battery of Leslie's located in the orchestra pit. A tribute to this man's renowned skill was indicated by the presence in the audience of numerous top-line organists past and present, all anxious to hear the No. 1 man from America. It was hoped he could have played the big 4-manual

* 'I m On My Way'

Wurlitzer still in the theatre and in excellent order although rarely used, but contractual obligations prevented this. However, all agreed George Wright is a superlative organist who never impairs melody by resorting to "way-out" chords and arrangements.

I lunched with BBC friends members of COS, including the London Secretary Douglas Badham. At the home of Len Rawle (who gave me his latest 12" LP - 'Wurlitzer Magic'), I found he has added more ranks to his 4-man Wurlitzer (ex Empire Theatre, Leicester Sq.) - the largest of its kind in Europe, and at Len's parents home at Northolt which I visited in 1971, I again played the 3-man Wurlitzer there. To my astonishment I noted Mr. Rawle Snr. had acquired another 3-manual Wurlitzer from a disused theatre. Can you imagine the sight of TWO theatre consoles standing on the lounge room floor!

Up North, the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust (akin to TOSA) is committed to encouraging young organists, two of whom I secured fine recordings made on 4-manual theatre and pipe organs in Manchester. One - Simon Wright - obtained his A.R.C.O. at 17 and his F.R.C.O. with distinction at 18.

On the electronic organ scene, I went to several local dealer promotion concerts in Essex. One featured no less than 4 different organs on the same programme - Farfisa, Gulbrandsen, Lowrey and Thomas, each with its own skilled demonstrator.

Public interest in organ music is on the increase in U.K. Theatre organs are being installed in numerous different places including Miners' Clubs up north, recreation halls of big business concerns, a hospital staff hall, some seaside hotel lounges, country inns, and one even in a motor car showroom and service station in Norfolk, not to mention a few private homes too.

In May issue of TOSA News there are three items of interest to me personally, all having a link, over 40 years ago.

Ian Grigg's fine article mentions the Christie organ at the Concord Ritz. The first organist to play that instrument was (Jack) Knight Barnett, and I received my first tuition from him there in 1931. When he later transferred to and became resident featured organist at the Prince Edward, I was still a pupil of his, and was thus able to get further experience on the Wurlitzer. Of course, that organ is now TOSA's own; I wonder if perchance any member can claim to have played it ahead of myself, i. e. early 1932.