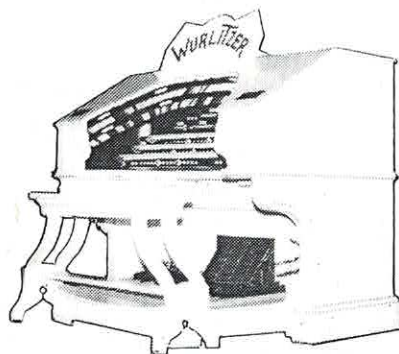
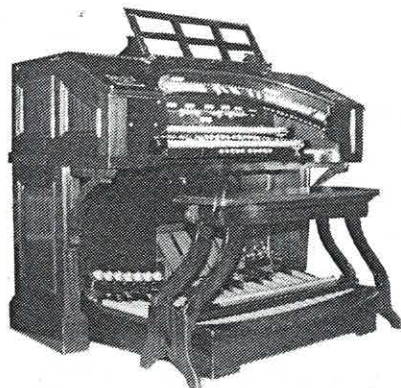


TOSA

MAY 1990

Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

NEWS

You have another opportunity to hear
IAN DAVIES
play the Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
at Marrickville Town Hall, Sunday 27th May at 2pm



BOOKING FORM
IN THIS ISSUE

Volume 29
Issue 5

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.
P.O. Box C462, Clarence Street, Sydney 2000
Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. N.B.H. 1038

Price
\$1.00

TOSA NEWS

MAY 1990

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COMING EVENTSMAY

- Mon. 7 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING
Tues. 15 at 8.00pm Club Night & Quarterly Members' Meeting at the Orion Centre.
Sun. 27 at 2.00pm IAN DAVIES will present another Popular Concert on Marrickville Town Hall WurliTzer pipe organ.

JUNE

- Mon. 4 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING
Sun. 24 at 2.00pm DAVID DRURY & MARGARET HALL These two artists will be presenting a combined concert in their individual styles at the Orion Centre WurliTzer.

JULY

- Mon. 2 at 7.30pm COMMITTEE MEETING
Sun. 22 at 2.00pm WALT STRONGY IN CONCERT at Orion Centre WurliTzer. He will also be drawing the winner for T.O.S.A. Guessing Competition.
Sun. 29 in afternoon Rolls Royce Owners Club will be holding a dance function at which the WurliTzer will be used in addition to other music. T.O.S.A. Members will be welcome. More details will be advised in future issues.

REMEMBER TO TUNE-IN TO 2CBA-FM

EVERY MONDAY NIGHT AT 9.00pm -
For "Theatre Organ Highlights"
FRIDAY NIGHTS AT 7.30pm -
For "Careers of Australian Theatre Organists"



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

CONVENTION UPDATE

From your Convention Committee

The convention planning committee has established the programme for Sydney's 1991 Easter Convention. An audio-visual presentation was recently shown at the Melbourne convention and NSW members will have the opportunity to view this at a forthcoming club night.

As mentioned in the last issue, we are fortunate to have secured the talents of two top international artists. The differing musical styles of Phil Kelsall and Simon Gledhill will ensure two outstanding concert performances.

Organs to be featured during the convention will be the Orion Centre 3/17 WurliTzer, Marrickville 2/11 WurliTzer, Orpheum Theatre 3/13 WurliTzer, Epping Baptist Church 2/10 Christie and the Mosman Baptist Church 2/9 Standaard organ. It is also planned to visit the Sydney Town Hall to hear the 5 manual 1890 Wm. Hill & Son organ and the Sydney Opera House.

A Sydney Convention would not be complete without a harbour cruise and this will be a feature for visitors to Sydney.

Our list of local artists include Bill Schumacher, Margaret Hall, Cliff Bingham, David Drury, Neil Jensen and John Giacchi.

More information on the convention will appear in further issues.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. C.A. Woodside who became a member of our Society during this last month.

REVIEW/S OF MELBOURNE CONVENTION

Copy has not been received in time for this issue, however it is anticipated this information will be included in the June issue of TOSA NEWS.

WANTED

George Wright recordings either on record or reel-to-reel - especially HI FI and DOT recordings from 1950's and 60's - Any Condition, but will pay top price for records in mint condition.

Contact Nick Lang - 579 5790 after 6.30pm.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Peter,

In John Martin's series "Towards Better Organ Playing #6", I feel that there are a couple of points that need some correction.

In the case of the WurliTzer Theatre Organ, the Crescendo pedal operates as explained by Mr. Martin, however it does not bring on any percussions. The Sforzando pedal, on the other hand, is shaped similar to a piano pedal and has double touch operation. Depressing this pedal gives instant full organ on first touch, while second touch adds the tuned percussions, usually - Xylophone, Glockenspiel and Sleigh Bells.

Yours faithfully

Neil Palmer

REVIEWS!

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Yes you have read correctly, as on this occasion we have two reviews written of the same concert. We are grateful to the two members responsible and thank them for their interest and effort.

'NEW FACES' CONCERT

Marrickville Town Hall, 1st April, 1990.

It is a policy of The Theatre Organ Society to find organists who have talent, but are unknown to the public, and to give them the opportunity to gain concert experience by playing at one of the Society's Free Concerts.

This policy has justified itself by results - it was at such a concert that the young Neil Jensen from Brisbane was first heard - and you can probably think of another six or seven names that first came to our notice at a Free Concert.

On Sunday, 1st April, 1990 at Marrickville Town Hall the Society presented a programme "New Faces" when we heard three organists, Wendy Hambly, Chris Styles, and Colin Adamson give their first recital for the Society.

They each appeared for one third of the first half, and then again for one third of the second half, thus appearing twice, an arrangement that worked quite well.

Wendy Hambly played first and her opening number was 'The Best Things in Life are Free'. A quite successful introduction, and her arrangement and style of playing reminded me very much of what the professional theatre organists called 'coming up pieces', that is the type of music they played when the console lift brought them up from below floor level into full audience view.

Her first bracket also included 'Waltz of My Heart', 'Pedro the Fisherman', and 'Old Father Thames' and in the second half she played 'Bells Across the Meadow', 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes', and 'The Road to Mandalay'.

Her best pieces were probably 'Old Father Thames' which was played with energy and feeling; 'Bells Across the Meadow' which was well played and very well arranged; 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' which was part of another song combination, and 'The Road to Mandalay' again played and arranged well.

One aspect of her playing which deserves special comment is the way in which she combines the different stops (registration) to get the kind of sound that is needed for the particular kind of music being played. She also has a good appreciation of how and when to use the percussion stops on the organ.

Her arrangements, choice of music and the way she played reminded me very much of the music and style of playing that we had in our theatres when they had full time organists. Others thought so too, and Frank Ellis at the end of the first half of her programme congratulated her and remarked that "she has the style and sound that we heard in our theatres in the past". Well - Frank heard most of them and he should know.

Continued on Page 4

'NEW FACES CONCERT' - Continued.

The next organist was Chris Styles who had prepared a well structured programme which commenced with some lively pieces, one novelty number, and then the main part of his first half - a selection from 'Oliver' and concluding with the 'Trumpet Voluntary'.

In the second half he gave us the theme from 'A Country Practice'; 'I'm in the Mood for Love'; 'Stars Fell on Alabama' and a selection from 'Annie Get Your Gun'.

His two musical show selections were very well received, but the audience applause was probably greater for his version of 'I'm in the Mood for Love'.

He has good registration and his arrangements are good. After he settled down his playing was quite confident and precise.

Jeremiah Clark's 'Trumpet Voluntary' which he played in the first half is a classical piece generally played on the diapasons, tuba, string and flute stops. However when he introduced this piece he told the audience that this organ has a really exciting stop called the English Post Horn and he was going to feature it in the Trumpet Voluntary.

I became a bit worried and wondered what we might be in for because I remember the story from America about the theatre chain that commissioned the famous organist Jesse Crawford to prepare the specifications for the fourteen 4 manual WurliTzers that it was planning to install.

When the theatres opened some organists asked Jesse why he had not included the Post Horn in the specifications. He said that in his opinion the Post Horn in the hands of an over enthusiastic organist was the most overused and misused of any organ stop and he had left it out so as to save the audience from the organist.

I really didn't have to worry. Chris' arrangement was quite innovative and his use of the Post Horn was well conceived. It got very good applause from the audience and it left me with a much higher opinion of the Post Horn than I had previously - thanks Chris.

The third New Face was Colin Adamson, and for his opening number he chose 'Another Opening, Another Show'. This piece as an 'opener' works well for Tony Fenelon, it also worked very well for Colin Adamson and quickly brought the audience on side.

He continued with 'Bring Him Home'; an old hymn with a long (16 word) title; 'Andantino' and concluded with 'Under the Double Eagle'. His second half commenced with 'Rule Britannia' then followed 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square' and concluded with Grieg's 'Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen'.

A quite varied programme and one that required a wide range of playing skills, but he had the necessary skills and the programme succeeded.

He was good, but where was he best? Well he was at his best in 'Bring Him Home' from Les Miserables. This is a slow, slightly sad but quite beautiful song. It was played with great sensitivity and feeling. Another slow piece beautifully played was 'Andantino', but his best was in the finale, Grieg's 'Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen'. It was a fine performance and everybody's favourite.

New Faces was a good concert and the audience enjoyed it, but there was one disappointment. Brendon Lukin was unable to play. Remember that name, you'll be hearing more of him in the future.

Russell Robertson

THREE NEW FACES CONCERT

At Marrickville - 1st April 1990.

By Colin Tringham.

April the 1st may not have been the most propitious day for three new performers to entertain TOSA members, but the Concert had been postponed from the previous weekend to avoid a clash with Robert Wolfe's farewell at the Cremorne Orpheum. However our three newcomers did not have to worry - they all put on a good show. In a way our trio were seasoned performers, as all play regularly for their Churches. In this they are staying with tradition, as many of the theatre Organists have come from the ranks of Church Organists.

Frank Ellis made several announcements and then introduced the first Organist, Wendy Hambly, who was sitting in the audience and had chosen to wear an elegant dress in (aquamarine?) blue. No stranger to the Organ bench, Wendy plays regularly for the Lidcombe Berala Baptist Church. A spectacular musical introduction led to an appropriate first item 'The Best Things in Life are Free' which she has adopted as her signature tune. This was played with nice left hand harmonies and a bluesy central chorus with plenty of good pedal figures. Next we heard an Ivor Novello Waltz with good use of the Chrysoglott and excellent phrasing. Wendy then played one of her own favourites 'Pedro the Fisherman' which gave her plenty of chance to play straight Organ excerpts along with the melody, there were plenty of variations in sound and excellent use of the tremulants in this piece. Wendy completed her first appearance with a rousing version of 'Old Father Thames'.

Frank Ellis next introduced Chris Styles with a long and rambling - and pointless - memory of an actor with a similar name. He then introduced Chris incorrectly and had to return and introduce him correctly. Chris handled the error with good humour and played an energetic introductory piece called 'Hoop de Doo'. This was followed by the 'Aeroplane Jelly Song' which he claimed was promised but missed at the last

THREE NEW FACES CONCERT - Continued.

concert at Campsie. Next we heard 'Mountain Greenery' which had good variety in its registration and then a piece of straight Organ 'The Trumpet Voluntary' by Jeremiah Clarke. Chris normally plays Organ at St.Lukes Church, Enmore and he sounded very much at home with this item. He concluded with 'The Best of Times' from 'La Cage aux Folles'.

Following a short introduction we heard Colin Adamson who started with a most appropriate 'Another Opening Another Show' with a particularly jolly second chorus. In a complete contrast we heard a quiet piece, 'Bring Him Home' from 'Les Miserables'. The manual balance was not quite right at the start. Next a hymn - more appropriate perhaps as Colin is the Organist for St.Johns Cathedral at Parramatta. Next 'Andantino' by Lemair - known to most as 'Moonlight and Roses'. Colin concluded with a rousing march - 'Under the Double Eagle' by Sousa. This was taken just a trifle too fast for my liking, but Colin was courageous enough to use the effects pedals (to the right of the swell pedals) to bring in appropriate drum and cymbal sounds where needed.

In the second half of the show, Wendy played an excellent version of 'Bells Across the Meadow' by Ketelby with very good and unhurried use of the chimes. Then came 'The Waltzing Cat' which Wendy first heard in a Tom and Jerry cartoon. Next a pleasant 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' and the finale was 'The Road to Mandalay' using the Crescendo Pedal to advantage in the final bars.

Chris Styles chose 'The Theme from a Country Practice' which was well received by this show's fans, then a smooth 'I'm in the Mood for Love' a sweet 'Stars Fell on Alabama' and a selection from 'Annie Get Your Gun'. All pieces were well played but needed more variety of sound.

Colin Adamson's final selection commenced with a rousing 'Rule Britannia', contrasting with 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square' featuring neat chromatic runs. Next another classical piece - 'Wedding Day at Troidhaugen' from Peer Gynt by Grieg. This was very enthusiastically received and really blew the dust from the rafters with full Organ. As an encore Colin played 'The Washington Post March'.

My opinion is that all three players did an exceptionally good job for their first TOSA concert and I believe that all have the potential to become regular performers on the WurliTzer, however some improvements could be made, and if these players listen carefully to the tapes of their first efforts they will hear the areas which need attention. Stop selections were reasonably varied, but could have been more so. When a registration is already fairly full, it takes more than just one or two tab changes to significantly alter the sound. When a chorus is repeated, it would be an improvement if both a completely different registration and harmony could be employed. Finally all three performers handled

the microphone well, but would have looked better if they had sat upright and looked straight at the audience, rather than tending to slouch over the microphone. These are all matters which will be improved with experience and practice.

All three artists made mention of the assistance they had received from our practice Convenor, Bob Staunton and Neil Palmer. In addition they asked me to thank Bill Schumacher for generously giving up some of his time to assist with registration suggestions.

THE CHRISTIE UNIT CINEMA ORGAN

Some recollections of their early history by
Herbert Norman.

In 1926 the first unit extension theatre organ designed and built by Hill, Norman & Beard was made for the Elite Theatre, Wimbledon.

Hill Norman & Beard and Norman & Beard before them, had built organs for theatres since 1911, starting with Rye Cinema Peckham, and Islington, the Angel, specified by Sir George Martin, then organist of St.Pauls Cathedral. Others had been built for the Rivoli at Newington Green and the Regent Brighton - the latter devised by the talented organist Quentin Maclean. There were also instruments in the Capitol Haymarket and the Kensington Cinema, where Charles Saxby was the house organist. All of these were 'straight' (church type) instruments, all with slider soundboards and the first three with 'exhaust' pneumatic actions.

Besides these early instruments, there were the two travelling organs, moving each weekend to some new venue. They were each tended by at least three organ builders, one driving the four-wheel drive truck-tractor from town to town. One instrument was named the "Max Erard" and the other much larger, the "Harvey Bathurst" which I helped to design in about 1923 (Now installed in the Town Hall Dunedin, New Zealand with enlargements). There was a third travelling organ built by Harrison & Harrison called the "Pattman". It boasted a 32' reed, though with but one pipe, said to sound DDDD.

The organist at the Elite, Wimbledon was one Steff Langston, up to that time the private organist of Woburn Abbey. He became adviser to the Christie Unit Organ Syndicate, the unit organ sales organisation set up by John Christie with Donald Beard and Victor Hays-Jones. The office was in Regent Street, almost over the New Gallery Cinema containing the newly imported WurliTzer which had provided the model for the Wimbledon organ.

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THE CHRISTIE UNIT CINEMA ORGAN - Continued.

Of all this I knew nothing until the order and the stop list was put on my drawing board with a request to design the organ and get it built.

Now, up to that time, the few electric action organs we had built had followed the details of the Robert Hope-Jones patents, to which HN&B had acquired the rights some twenty years earlier.

Clearly something more modern was required and arrangements were made for me to have a brief look inside the second WurliTzer organ in London at the Empire Theatre, Tottenham. The organ was a revelation to me with self adjusting key and switch contacts, very small wind regulators and huge tremulants! This experience was followed by a contract to move an American built "Orchestrelle" 2 manual house organ with electric action and a paper roll player mechanism. The instrument had been built by the Hutchings-Votey Company, whose action designs had been acquired by WurliTzer when they took over Hope-Jones' tonal ideas and developed the "Mighty WurliTzer". These two instruments gave me a general idea of what was wanted.

The installation at Wimbledon was delayed, so Opus 2 was, in fact the first Christie to be finished. Its destination was at the Globe Cinema, Old Kent Road, London. A 'flea pit' cinema but with up-to-date ideas. On it we cut our teeth. I was particularly proud of my design for a highly responsive, mechanical swell-shutter mechanism, which used a set of compound levers to 'flick' one shutter open first. Players were complimentary about it but it was usually impossible to arrange a mechanical connection, so the idea was dropped.

A series of instruments followed for the Bernstein circuit, with organs at Enfield, Balham, Willesden, Stratford and other London suburbs. The design developed with each one. Octave and Sub Octave couplers were gradually dispensed with and all ranks extended in the 'WurliTzer' manner. The Wimbledon instrument was one of the first to be recorded using electrical instead of acoustical equipment. The tonal quality was no advertisement however, because the signal was passed down an ordinary Post Office telephone line! A school of cinema organ playing was established at the Marble Arch Pavilion. It met a need and was well supported at the time.

The instrument in the Regal Cinema, Edmonton stands out in my memory. Sidney Torch the designer and player, complained that the action seemed slower and the sound 'confused'. He was indeed right, but the only thing different was the exceptionally spacious and resonant organ chambers. I procured almost an acre of carpet underfelt and lined all the chamber walls with it to achieve the crisp sound which Torch desired.

The "magnum opus" of the Christie Unit organs was the 1929 instrument built to Quentin Maclean's specification, for the Regal Cinema, Marble Arch, London. There were over thirty extended ranks including a fully extended 5 rank String Mixture! Unusual features included sustainers and pizzicato couplers, a tuned 20 note bird whistle and a 'tolling' bell... This latter was a 4 inch diameter Bessemer steel bar, eleven feet long, struck with an eleven pound hammer! On the "toy counter" the Crockery Smash was so realistic that when first tested, theatre staff were concerned that one of the elaborate glass chandeliers had fallen to the floor of the theatre.

Throughout the production of Christie organs, they were blown by Duplex electric blowers designed and made by G.R.Dain & Co. from a workshop within the old Hill Organ works in York Way, Islington. The blowers were the product of a trio of diverse engineers. A former Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Indian Railways, a former sea-going engineering artificer of the Royal Navy and a switchgear designer.

Dains also made a number of console lifts. The console normally rested level with the floor of the orchestra pit and was raised some six feet or more so that the performer could be seen during the organ interval. The lift design was combined with that of the console so that the ends of the wide console case enclosed the main lifting points when down, so saving orchestra space.

Unlike the WurliTzer or Compton instruments, the Christie organs had individually designed console cases. Many of these were very distinctive, the case with the Egyptian theme at the "Pyramid" Theatre, Sale being a particular example.

In the early 1930's an additional feature was introduced, attractive to the showmen, in the form of internally illuminated glass cases to the consoles. These had dimmer controlled coloured lighting, continuously changing or at the players control. We made half a dozen or so, all different, using "Holophane" lighting via jointly patented control system. The three dimmers to each console were switched via the organ action current, using organ switching technology and saving the cost of mains operated equipment.

The 1936 organ in the Dome Pavilion, Brighton bears the Hill, Norman & Beard label but was a Christie unit organ in all but name. With filtered air intakes to the blowers and total enclosure, plus superb maintenance by Bill Ashby and his successors, the instrument continues to this day without ever being dismantled for cleaning.

Christie organs were exported to Paris, Vienna, Munchen (Munich), Gladbach and Brno, Czechoslovakia as well as to the Antipodes.

FOOTNOTE:

Herbert Norman was appointed works director of Wm. Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd. in 1924 and was personally responsible for console design, action design and physical layout of all Christie Unit Organs.

Reprinted courtesy of "The Organbuilder" magazine, 1989 edition.

TOWARDS BETTER ORGAN PLAYING Number 7 by John Martin - "Naked Music"

Few of us look at our very best 'au naturel' and the addition of some well-tailored clothes improves the looks of even the least favourably assembled body. In the same way playing a piece of music 'naked' (the music, not you personally) is to spoil the overall effect.

Each piece needs an introduction and an ending. Sometimes one piece can be used to lead into another - when used in a bracket of numbers for instance. First we will look at playing a single piece. Using the circle of chords, we know that if the piece is in the key of C, then the last chord of our introduction will normally be G7 as this leads naturally into the key of the piece. What we do before we get to this G7 chord is entirely up to you, and it is worth while to sit at the keyboard and just play around with notes and chord sequences to develop an ear for a suitable introduction. Of course a VERY good starting place for any introduction is the last phrase of the piece you are going to play. This last hint is particularly relevant if you are playing for a sing-along as the audience will recognise the piece and be ready to sing with you without further prompting when you start the actual chorus.

We also need to provide our audience with some tonal clues that we are playing the introduction with the main item soon to follow. Try playing the introduction in a lighter registration and add one or two ranks to each manual when you start the main body of the piece. A very effective way of playing an introduction (which you cannot use all the time though) is to turn off all the tremulants for the introduction and then turn them on at the start of the piece. This really makes the audience sit up and take notice!

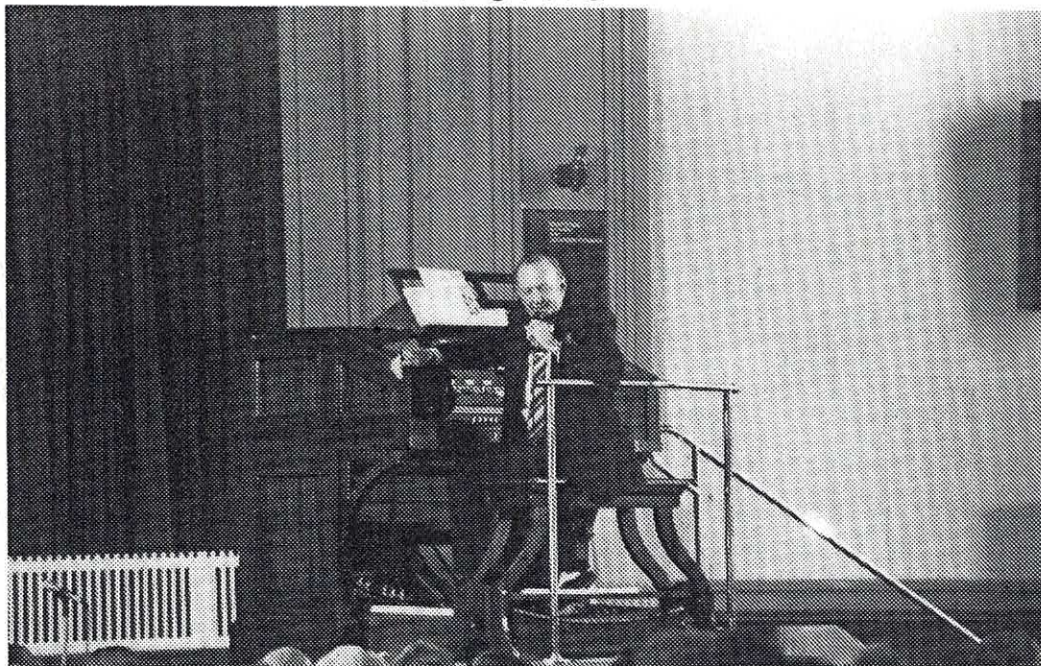
If you are playing a bracket of numbers, then you will normally use an introduction to the first item and then you will need to use link phrases between subsequent numbers. The main problem here is to finish up with the correct chord to lead into the first notes and chord of the new number. Once again, that circle of chords is invaluable. A short sequence of notes, made out of the notes of the intermediate chords is easy to

play and will not make harsh demands on the listeners. For instance, if the first tune is in C, the second is in B flat and the third in D we have one easy and one slightly difficult link to work out. The first link is simplicity itself, a piece in C will end with a C major chord, just add the seventh to this to make it a C7. This will naturally lead to F, and again add the seventh and you have a simple lead into the key of B flat.

The second link needs a more round-about route. The second item will end in a B flat major chord and we need to go to an A7th chord to lead into our third key of D. We could go directly, from the B flat chord to the A7th but it would not sound smooth. One handy hint is that when changing chords drastically, the change is masked if there are common notes in the old and new chords. So to get into what I tend to call "right field" (i.e. SHARP keys) from "LEFT field" (FLAT keys), I find a linking chord with at least one common note. A possible answer to this lies in the diminished and augmented chords. Actually the latter is such a useful chord that I will make a separate article out of it alone. But back to the current problem. From B flat chord, try playing B flat diminished. This uses the notes of G, B flat (or A sharp), C sharp and E. Now the C sharp is also the third note in the chord of A7 so we could weave a melody around the chord sequence: B flat, B flat diminished, A7th and lead into the wanted key of D.

In a similar way we also need to provide a positive ending to our bracket of numbers. Once more the last phrase of the piece, repeated, and perhaps played with a gradual slowing effect - and with maximum "schmaltz" can be used. A common trick among the old theatre Organists was to play a piece, or a bracket and repeat the last chorus low on the keyboard, with single notes and a brassy registration with lots of pathos and smeared notes. Try this with a tune such as 'On the Sunny Side of the Street'. It works! Listen to some of your favourite players too and try and analyse the last few bars of the piece. It will give you plenty to practice.

IAN DAVIES Profile



Ian started to study music at a very early age. He began piano lessons under the tutelage of his mother. Two years later, he became a pupil of Miss K.Cox, and continued with her for three years. It was at this point that the pipe organ made its entry into Ian's life. His mother frequently played the organ at St.John's Presbyterian Church at Essendon, Victoria.

Ian persuaded her to give him lessons and after six months, he became a pupil of the organist of the church.

He began his professional theatre organ career in Melbourne, playing the Plaza, Regent and Capitol WurliTzers, and Hammond organs at Brunswick and Albert Park.

During the war, while serving with the R.A.N. overseas, Ian was guest organist at the Regal Theatre, Grays and Forum Theatre, Avon-mouth, Wales.

Upon his return to Melbourne, he returned to Hoyt's circuits, his last theatre organ season being at the 3 manual, 15 rank WurliTzer at the Capitol Theatre, where he held a five year residency.

His magnificent opening recital at the 1965 convention of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia is but one of the memorable programmes which has made Ian Davies so popular with T.O.S.A. members.

He was also featured opening organist at the 1966 convention on the Capitol WurliTzer as well as playing the introduction for the re-opening of the organ in the Orion Centre, Campsie in October 1988.

Ian is ever-ready to give of his many talents for the members, and an Ian Davies recital for the Society, always attracts a full house of enthusiastic members and their friends.

He has also recently commenced a new series of free lunch time organ recitals at the Bondi Junction - Waverley RSL Club each Friday between 1.00 and 2.00pm. Visitors are always welcome.