TORA December 2022 Volume 61 No.8 PRICE \$2.50









TOSA wishes all

Members

0

Very Merry

Christmas

and

Happy New Year

#tosansw

Directory

Patron Dr John Atwell

President

Neil Palmer president@tosa.net.au 9798 6742

Vice Presidents John Weismantel 0435 258 287 whitecoats@bigpond.com David Badman 0408 230 337

Secretary

Simon Ellis secretary@tosa.net.au 0403 548 354 PO Box 63 BUXTON NSW 2571 **Treasurer**

Geoff Brimley treasurer@tosa.net.au 0403 308 915

Membership Inquiries Margaret Badman (02) 4776 2192 PO Box 589 RICHMOND NSW 2753 membership@tosa.net.au

Committee

Barry Tooker 9744 1535 Pam Lawson 0457 866 010 Robert Gliddon christieorg@bigpond.com Ernie Vale 0415 626 064 Michael Curran 0412 332 952 Eric Burwood ericburwood@optusnet.com.au

TOSA NEWS Editor

Ernie Vale 0415 626 064 editor@tosa.net.au

Marrickville Players Convener

John Batts 0420 424 103 Neil Palmer 9798 6742

Orion Players Convener John Batts 0420 424 103

West Ryde Christie Convenor

John Weismantel 0435 258 287

Ticket Secretary (Concert Bookings) Theo Langenberg 0410 626 131 before 8:00pm please

> Artist Liaison Officer Craig Keller 0418 484 798

Photography Barry Tooker 9744 1535

Publicity Officer Ernie Vale 0415 626 064

TOSA News David & Margaret Badman

Printer Printers of Richmond

President



Dear Members,

Thank you to those who attended the Annual General Meeting at West Ryde Anglican Church. We had a quorum which meant that the meeting was able to proceed! You will find all the AGM reports in this edition of the newsletter. Please read the Executive's Reports as they contain some important information.

Thanks to retiring committee member John Batts for his contributions throughout the year. I believe John will continue being the liaison person regarding the monthly member's event.

I welcome Eric Burwood onto the committee and we look forward to his contributions. Speaking of the AGM, thank you to the ladies & gents who organised the refreshments and to those who contributed to the musical content of the afternoon by playing the Christie pipe organ.

Don't forget our first concert for this year is on 11th December with Tony Fenelon at Marrickville Town Hall and I look forward to seeing you there. On behalf of the Executive & Committee I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy, Happy New Year.

Regards,

Neil

Editorial



Hello Members,

This issue brings good news for a number of reasons.

The Christmas concert at Marrickville Town Hall is back with Tony Fenelon.

The former Regent Theatre, Sydney, Wurlitzer has been removed and placed in storage for refurbishment and installation in the Liberty Theatre, Yass.

Restoration of the Orion Wurlitzer following water damage continues to progress well.

The Executive and Committee has been returned for 2022-23 with one new member, Eric Burwood. Eric is a regular at members player days.

Best Regards, Ernie Vale, Editor

From the Mailbox...



Digital Lodgement National Library of Australia ISSN 2208-9098 (Online)

Thanks for your responses and please continue to email or write in, telling us what you think. Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit any submitted comments and, as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of TOSA NSW Div. Please submit all comments via email to: The Editor *editor@tosa.net.au*

Please Note

The Society's only bank account now is with **St George.** Details are **BSB 112-879, account number 442 088 530**.

Please direct all payments to this account with St George Bank.

Members Players Day at the Christie Cinema Organ

The following attended yesterday's players day at WRAC:

Players: Kevin Eadie, Eric Burwood, David Badman

Listeners: Ernie Vale, Robert Gliddon, Theo Langenberg, John Weismantel, Margaret Badman

No donations were collected, but Margaret & David supplied tea, coffee and bikkies.

John Wesimantel

Members

Treat your family and friends to a first time invitation to come along to the Christmas Concert to hear Tony Fenelon play your mighty Wurlitzer.

This is a unique opportunity to introduce them to the wonderful sounds of the Wurlitzer musical instrument designed and developed by the genius Robert Hope Jones.

You can print off as many invitations as you like from the invitation included with this TOSA News. Only \$25 per Adult. Children Free

Do come along for a fun musical experience.

To Watch Out for

Christmas Concert

with Tony Fenelon

Marrickville Town Hall

Sunday 11th December

2:pm - 4:30pm

Public Transport

Buses 418, 425 & 426 all stop in front of the Town Hall

Dear Members,

TOSA would really appreciate your help by encouraging friends to come along to the **Christmas concert on Sunday December 11th featuring Tony Fenelon.**

We would like to fill the Hall with people to enjoy what is a world class Wurlitzer in a perfect room played by our world class musician, Tony Fenelon.

If your friends are first timers they only pay \$25ea and you can book by phoning Theo with their Name and address or email

Please help us to achieve a Full House.

Advertising

Rates in

TOSA News

For Members: Small, Organ related ads = FREE! For all other cases: Quarter Page = \$25 Half Page = \$50 Full Page = \$100 Full Page Insert = \$125.00

Members' Dates West Ryde Anglican Church

> The next players day is Wednesday 15th February 2023

Convener is John Weismantel

0435 258 287 or whitecoats@bigpond.com

Marrickville Town Hall

Monday 28th November

Convener is John Batts on 0420424103 He will email you to confirm availability

TOSA NSW Divn Inc

Annual General Meeting November 12th 2022 Reports

President's Report for 2022 Annual General Meeting

Dear members, welcome to my first AGM report as President.

Just when we thought we were getting back into being able to have concerts with the easing of Covid restrictions, we were thwarted by two situations. Firstly, the Orion Wurlitzer suffered storm water damage in February putting that instrument temporarily out of operation. Further details on this will be covered in the Orion report. With Marrickville Town Hall it has been a case of the difficulties being able to secure a Sunday booking although we have been able to secure a booking for the 11th December, our first concert since 2019. Perhaps it's ironic that our last concert was held at Marrickville Town Hall in 2019 and our first concert for 2022 will be held there. Fortunately, the hall has been available most Mondays throughout the year for member's practise and the monthly member's event.

Last month saw the first of the member's events to be held on the Christie Unit organ at West Ryde Anglican Church. Work continues on the Christie and an update on progress will be covered in the respective report.

An enjoyable afternoon of music and socialising was held at the music studio of our Secretary, Simon Ellis at Balmoral Village in the Southern Highlands. Thanks to Simon and his wife Anna for hosting us.

Your committee has continued to meet throughout the year and as you would probably expect, the main topic has been centred around the Orion Wurlitzer. We have four dates for concerts booked for 2023.

I would like to thank the Executive and Committee I have worked with since becoming President in February, particularly our Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Membership Secretary and those who renominated to serve during 2023. I also welcome those who will join the committee for the first time. Thanks to Barry for providing supper at the committee meetings.

I wish to also thank the organ technical crews and assistants and to Margaret and Pam for organising the refreshments for this afternoon.

And to you the members, thank you for your support by continuing your membership. Surely the fact that there is a concert next month means that there are better times ahead for TOSA NSW?

Finally, let's hope that Covid stays well and truly in the background for the rest of this year and in the future.

Neil Palmer



President Neil presents his report

Secretary's Report to TOSA (NSW) AGM, 12 November, 2022

Thank you for your attendance again here at West Ryde for your Annual General Meeting.

Indeed, it only seems like yesterday that we were gathering for the same purpose...such are the vagaries of these Covid-inspired times that we get to hold two Annual General Meetings in one year! Your committee has been working hard over these last months, trying to plan for our future, and the return to a more regular programme of events. This has been difficult, as I am sure that you all realise.

Just when we thought that we were likely to be able to operate in the beginnings of a passing- Covid world, everyone was faced with the reality of new viral variants, which for many of us, prolonged the agony of social isolation, or the restrictions on freedom of movement. And then came the weather!

We were aware that requisite work being undertaken at Marrickville Town Hall would limit the possibility for holding events there, but the Committee was busily planning for a restoration of activity on our Wurlitzer at Campsie...until, that is, the rains came bringing flood damage to the organ chambers. Due, in large part, to the tireless work of President Neil, negotiations with Canterbury Bankstown City Council have led to restoration work being currently undertaken by our "resident" Organ Builder, John Parker. This work is progressing apace, with the current plan being to have the organ again playable by March 2023.

What have we achieved during this past almost nine months. The dedication of our Organ crew means that we are beginning to see the birth pangs of the West Ryde Christie theatre organ, as it starts to emerge into the light of Concert readiness. We are beginning the execution of a plan to encourage new growth in our Society in NSW, and generate interest in a new, younger crop of players and theatre organ enthusiast. We have managed, through the care and dedication of our erstwhile Treasurer, Geoff, to meet our financial obligations despite significantly diminished income. We are blest with a loyal Membership who continue to remain members, despite the inability regularly to come together. Ernie, our hardworking Editor, continues to issue interesting agglomerations of information in TOSA News. Margaret, Pam, and David still regularly keep a check on the well-being of our flock.

We even managed a great get-together at the Balmoral Bijou, where many people got to here and play "Wilhemina" and her glorious 58 ranks. We have the Christmas Concert planned, featuring Tony Fenelon at Marrickville. We are looking toward four concerts and other gatherings next year.

We are beginning to see signs of re-birth for TOSA NSW, as we approach Christmas 2022. Stick around and enjoy what the next year will bring. And please, be part of the rise of this Phoenix.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you all.

Simon Ellis Secretary

New Membership Fees

New Membership up to June 30th 2023

\$25.00 Full membership, \$20.00 Concession, Interstate or

Overseas \$25. \$5 discount if TOSA News emailed to you in

color. (Only one TOSA News per household)

Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

(02) 4776 2192 membership@tosa.net.au

New Associate Membership for spouse/partner an additional 50%



Members at the AGM

Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc. Treasurer's Report for year ended 30th June 2022

Good afternoon.

As we are all too well aware, the circumstances of the past financial year have again seriously curtailed Society activities.

Income has been restricted to membership fees (again at a 50% subsidised level); practice fees and members' days donations which help offset costs associated with those events; and donations. We particularly appreciate, and are extremely grateful, for one donation of \$10,000 from a long-time member. Donations of various amounts were also included by many members when they paid their membership. A big "thank you" to all.

Overall, gross income was \$17,069 with expenditure of \$6,290 giving a profit for the year of \$10,779.

At this time, I want to express my, and the Committee's, appreciation to Mrs Kristen Burke for her time freely given to audit our accounts.

A word about the future. With the community now returned to some sense of normality and our ability to resume concerts, membership fees for the 2023-24 year will have to revert to normal, that is, the 50% subsidy will no longer apply. Each of us is experiencing substantially increased costs in our day to day living.

Unfortunately, the Society is not exempt from these increases and the Committee is striving to restrict costs wherever possible and keep costs to our members at an affordable level. In this regard, it will be appreciated that only so much can be done. Some costs will eventually have to be passed on. To delay this as long as possible, and keep increases to the lowest amount possible, the Committee is asking members for four things.

1.Please continue to support the Society by your membership and attendance at concerts and Members' Days whenever possible;

2.Please advertise the Society to family, friends and acquaintances - regularly and frequently – don't give up;

3.Go further and invite them to come with you – a personal invitation is the best advertisement, and

4.Remember, this is your Society, and your Society needs you!

Should anyone wish to examine the accounts or financial records, or have any enquiry concerning them, please do not hesitate to ask. A printout of the accounts is available on request.

Thank you. Geoff Brimley

Marrickville Report for 2022 Annual General Meeting

The Marrickville Wurlitzer has been used by members for practise on most Mondays throughout the year. Although the instrument has generally been reliable, like several other pipe organs around Sydney, it was affected by the high humidity during those periods of excessive rain. I heard that a humidity reading taken inside the organ at Sydney Town Hall showed that it was on the verge of 100%.

At Marrickville this caused some ciphers where the pipe continues to sound when the note is released, probably due to the pallet valve that opens to let the air into the pipe having swollen causing it to bind on its guide pins due to the higher-than-normal humidity. The temporary fix is to lift the wailing pipe to silence it. Once humidity normalised, the pallet returned to normal operation. Such was the case with an offending Clarinet pipe. I was alerted to an intermittent cipher on the Diaphone which is usually played on the pedals. I was able to replicate the cipher to the point where it finally latched on which gave me the opportunity to enter the pipe chamber to investigate. This turned out to be a deteriorated gasket in the magnet assembly. I disrupted a member's playing event for about 15 minutes to replace the gasket. The changing weather conditions also caused tuning stoppers to slip on a couple of the bass pipes.

The piano attachment continues to be a work-in-progress as time and resources permit. The latest update is that the piano has now been mounted onto a mobile steel frame custom-built by member David Badman. An engine hoist modified by David was used to lift the piano. Once it was placed on blocks the old casters were removed then it was placed onto the frame. This manoeuvre was photographed and appeared in TOSA News. Assisting David were Barry Tooker, John Weismantel and myself.

Current work includes the installation of a passage board in front of the Vox Humana chest, replacing a temporary arrangement.

Our application for use of the hall for member's practise on Mondays in 2023 has been submitted to council and is awaiting approval. This is done annually. Representatives from the Metropolitan Orchestra visited Marrickville Town Hall to see and hear the Wurlitzer with the possibility of incorporating it in a future concert.

The Marrickville Town Hall building is currently shrouded by scaffolding while repairs and painting is being carried out to the façade and windows. This does not affect entry to the building.

Neil Palmer

Orion Wurlitzer Report for the 2022 Annual General Meeting

At the 2021 AGM which had been deferred until February of this year due to the pandemic, it was reported that storm water had entered the solo organ chamber. This was caused by a broken pipe under the car park at the rear of the building, a missing section of downpipe plus sunken pavers at the rear corner of the building. This has now been repaired by the council. An inspection by organ builder John Parker revealed the initial damage that had been caused to the instrument due to the ingress of storm water. As the organ is insured by Canterbury-Bankstown Council, owners of the Orion Centre, a report was submitted to Council by John Parker, the Society's preferred organ builder who has previous experience with the Orion Wurlitzer having been in charge of the installation in 1987 and has tuned it over many years. After many months of deliberation, the council approved for the organ repairs to commence.

A working bee was held with John Parker and several committee members where some of the large Tibia pipes were removed to safe storage within the Orion Centre and components were dismantled in readiness to be transported to Ermington for repair. We also wiped down mouldy surfaces within the pipe chamber with white vinegar to kill the mould spores.

The following scope of work for stage 1 of the repairs is based on information I received from John Parker.

Three split wooden wind trunks repaired & sealed. These trunks

also act as legs to support the Tibia bass wind chests and were partially submerged in water hence the splitting.

8-note 16' Tibia CC# bass wind chest: 8 pallet valves refaced and covered with new felt and leather. This chest is close to the floor and has been affected by dampness. Chest top board cleaned and polished. Face-board: 8 Primary blocks sanded level - Screws counter-bored. New screws fitted to primary wooden caps. Blocks fitted to face-board with valves adjusted. Face-board cleaned and polished.

Tibia Tremulant overhauled with Primary Block restored. 1 lead weight replaced.

These items have been returned to the Orion Centre. At the same time the following items were dismantled and transported to Ermington the following day:

Primary action face board and top board of the 8-note 16' Tibia CC bass wind chest. Primary action face board and top board of the 8' Tibia 10-note bass chest. This is stage two of the repairs and John Parker has commenced restoration of these items.

Committee members John Weismantel, Barry Tooker, Robert Gliddon and Ernie Vale were assistants with the dismantling and transportation and I would like to thank Ernie for coordinating the recent working bee and transportation when I was unavailable.

We appreciate the cooperation of George Khoury, the lessee of the Orion Centre and his brother John for access when it is required.

Neil Palmer



John Weismantel reporting on the Christie Cinema Organ



Graeme Costin reads the names of Executive & Committee



Birthday Cake for Ritchie Willis 96, TOSA's oldest member and Noah Curran 14, TOSA's youngest member



Ritchie & Noah cut the cake, Karl Zipzin & John Weismantel watch

The Christmas Concert is on Sunday December 11th, 2022, 2:00pm

Come to the Christmas Cabaret Style Concert

when Australia's World Class Musician

Tony Fenelon OAM

plays the Wurlitzer

at Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr. Marrickville & Petersham Rds.

Marrickville 2:00pm - 4:30pm

Tickets: Non Member Adult \$40; Pensioner \$35; Members \$25.

Students 18-21 years of age, Free on confirmation of Student Status

First time attendance for adults \$25 each by voucher at the box office

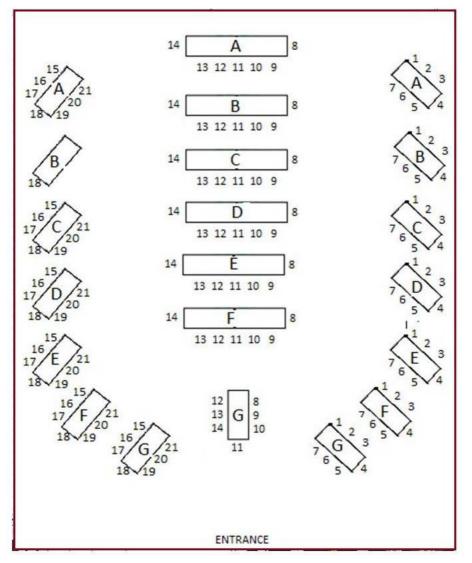
BYO drinks, glasses & nibbles. Jugs of Iced Water & Cups provided on each table

A delicious Afternoon Tea will be available at \$5 per person.

This includes a tasty treat and fresh brewed percolated coffee or tea.

A gluten free option will also be available.

You can book now on the TOSA Web site www.tosa.net.au



Book via the link using the Trybooking seating plan or phone Theo on 0410 626 131 before 8pm please

Your Committee are conscious of the fact that we have not been able to promote a concert for some time. Consequently we have retained ticket prices at the same level as past concerts.

We would love to see you at this Christmas Concert. Please encourage friends to come along to hear our great friend, Tony Fenelon, play your World Renowned Wurlitzer in the perfect acoustics of Marrickville Town Hall.

Make up a table of friends to have a fun afternoon of music. 7 seats to a table.

To keep costs down the bulk of the food is homemade and baked fresh on the Saturday prior to Sundays Concert.

At \$5 this represents great value for a tea or coffee plus tasty treat. There will be a choice of 4 tasty treats, 1 of which will be "gluten free"

Most Coffee Shops now have coffee and cake for \$9.00 plus, so this is a bargain. I'm sure you'll agree.

Tony Fenelon

American Theatre Organ Society Hall of Fame inductee

Tony showcases his incredibly wide repertoire in music genres at his concerts. He provides a tasteful balance between popular and light classics, including music from movies, stage shows, jazz and great standards.

Internationally acclaimed, **Tony** has performed countless major concerts in prestigious venues throughout Australia, New Zealand, USA, Japan, UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan on Roland's extensive range of contemporary keyboard instruments.

Over the years **Tony** has displayed an ability to skilfully arrange and sensitively accompany soloists and choirs. He is regarded highly by his peers as a musician's musician for his unique approach and examples of artistry and taste.

In 2003 **Tony** was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to music.

Members, please help us to fill the Town Hall by using the invitation included with this issue of TOSA News to introduce some friends or acquaintenances to the wonderful sounds of the Mighty Wurlitzer



Why not make this Christmas a special one, by surrounding yourself with Family and Friends at our Christmas Concert? Invite your neighbours, invite your Grandchildren, invite someone special. Help them experience the joy of a TOSA concert for just \$25 a ticket! See the invitation included with this TOSA News for first time attendees. Book a table now so you don't miss out"

WURLITZER ORGAN 1927 Organ to play again

BUILT IN NEW YORK FOR THE REGENT THEATRE SYDNEY

Originally built in North Tonawanda, New York and installed in 1927 in the palatial Regent theatre, George Street, Sydney, the Wurlitzer Style 260 Opus No 1808, 3 Manual / 15 Rank theatre pipe organ formed the centrepiece of the theatre. The cost of the instrument when installed was £25,000 (\$2,000,000 in Australian dollars today). It remained at the Regent until it was acquired in the 1960's by Sydney enthusiast Mr John Atkinson.

During the 1980's, John, fastidious in his restoration and maintenance efforts installed the organ in his family home in Hurstville, a suburb of Sydney where it was used to entertain many. In 2006 the organ was registered on the National Trust reflecting it is the last of its kind, has been faithfully restored, is fully intact and is of historical significance. *ABC News story 2006*

Unfortunately in July 2020, John suffered a catastrophic stroke and subsequently died, necessitating his family to find a new home for the Wurlitzer with preference for keeping all aspects of this incredible instrument in once piece.

ESTATE OF JOHN ATKINSON GIFTS ORGAN TO FRIENDS OF LIBERTY

The Friends of the Liberty Theatre have accepted the generous offer from the estate of John Atkinson to restore and house the rare and complete Wurlitzer Organ originally at the Regent Theatre in Sydney.

ABC Story 2021

The Wurlitzer Organ in its entirety (organ and pipes) can be accommodated in the restored Liberty Theatre. The Heritage Architect engaged for this project, Eric Martin, AM and Stephen Lanham (Deputy Chair the Aust. Organ Society) have looked at the available space to professionally house the organ so it may be used to its full potential to educate and entertain.

They confirmed the pipes can be installed on the level of the new dressing rooms beside the stairs on each side. The space above will have the roof extended higher so a suitable height space is provided. Alternatively, the additional dressing rooms planned are located below the stage to free up the higher space for the pipes.

The keyboard console will go on a platform that is below the stage and will be raised when required. The output for the music will be from about 3.6m either side of the stage against the external walls. Compressors and other equipment will be below the change rooms behind the stage. The installation of the Organ will be incorporated into the restoration plans for the theatre.

Article from the Friends of the Liberty Theatre, Yass NSW

BEGINNINGS:

Continued from October/November 2022 TOSA News An excerpt from The Encyclopedia of American Theatre Organ Volume 3 by Preston J. Kaufmann

THE UNIT ORCHESTRA FLOUNDERS: September To December 1912

RHJ at factory to FW, November 18, 1912: You may remember that we had an application from David Marr on the 29th of October reminding us of our promise to give him an increase at the end of six months service in his new position. I wrote on the 31st saying we would give him an extra dollar per week, and a copy of my letter bears your initials.

"It appears that the matter has been overlooked in the office, and Marr is feeling very sore about it. I have assured him that the oversight was unintentional and that you will have the increase put through. It is to date from November 1st, according to what I said in my letter to him."

RHJ in Manhattan to FW, November 23, 1912: ". . . I am going to Bronx Sunday a.m. The instrument is to be opened Monday night.

"On December 6, Taft and other notables attend a big performance at the Century [Theatre] for benefit of Titanic fund. As there is to be a large chorus, the musical people interested talk of using a brass orchestra as our instrument is too soft--wish we had those three big stops in!"

FW to RHJ in Manhattan, November 25, 1912: "Please let me

know what you have done in regard to the tests that were to be made at the Century Theatre with the reiterator, It is now four or five months since we first made this and I understood that it was a very simple thing and that you were going to try it out. At the time you thought it was not even worth trying it out, because you were positive that it would work. Let me know when you come back how Mr. White has found it and what Mr. Licome thinks of it and whether this ought to be incorporated in the instruments."

RHJ in Manhattan to FW, November 26, 1912: "Replying to yours of the 25th regarding reiterator at the Century--unfortunately there has been no time found to unpack this machine yet.

"There is great difficulty to keep the Century instrument running because of the bursting rotten leather motor parts and the swell shutter actions are still out of condition, but Pfeil will get around to this as soon as the Cort Theatre instrument is finished. . . . "

RHJ on train to Buffalo from Denver, to RWC (Rudolph Wurlitzer Company), December 7, 1912: "I shall not be surprised if you yet build a great organ for Denver Auditorium--I am fresh from a farewell luncheon given me by the leading musicians of the city and I find that they had much to do with Mayor Arnold's cancelling the Skinner contract. They are determined to get one of our instruments yet--though it may take years. . . ."

Company officials often made use of telegrams to pass messages quickly back and forth. The following was carried in a "night letter" sent through Western Union Telegraph Company--*RHJ in Manhattan to RWC, December15, 1912:* "My interview with Cort was fairly satisfactory. He instructs us to proceed though knowing work cannot be finished this week or next. Please wire early Monday wind pressures for Tuba, solo and main organ [of factory order #5244--1, a style 6]. I will probably stay in New York instead of going to Washington." The reply telegram sent the next day stated: "Tuba twelve inches, solo and main organ on six inches wind pressure."

Another night letter was dispatched, this one seeking feedback on a suggested contract being worked on--*RHJ in Manhattan to FW, December 16, 1912:* "If Hippodrome is worth special offer, will meet them Wednesday morning with following proposal. Instrument, Style 6, with six powerful stops added. Price, \$40,000. Payment, \$2,000 on signing contract and \$500 each week theatre is open, with interest. Condition, contract to be closed within four weeks."

to be continued Editor



Official Publication of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc. ISSN 2208-9098(Online) PO Box 63 BUXTON NSW 2571

If undeliverable please return to : PO Box 589 RICHMOND NSW 2753

www.tosa.net.au

