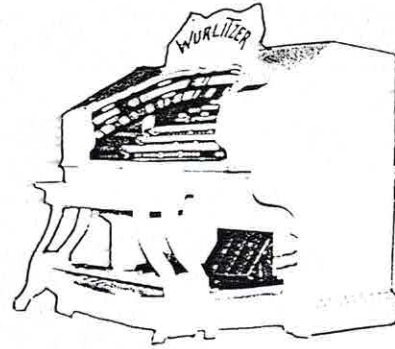
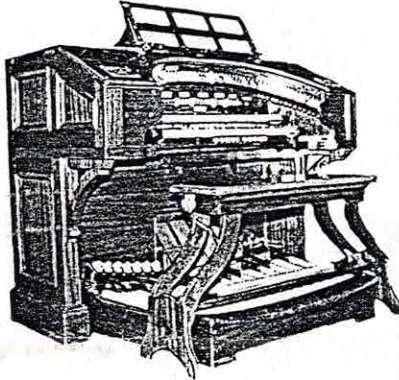


JANUARY, 1993

TOSA

Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

NEWS



DAVID JOHNSTON

at
The ORION
WURLITZER
with
"THE KIDS STAKES"
1927 Australian
Silent Film

* *

2.00 P.M.
SUNDAY, 21st
FEBRUARY
1993

* *

ORION CENTRE
BEAMISH ST,
CAMPSIE

* *

Concert
and Silent Film
accompanied by
the Wurlitzer
Theatre Organ

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TOSA NEWS

JANUARY, 1993

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (N.S.W. DIVISION) Inc.

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**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR !!**



COMING EVENTS

JANUARY

Monday 4 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

FEBRUARY

Monday 1 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Wednesday 3 at 7.30 pm Members' Night

Orion Centre Campsie

Sunday 21 at 2.00 pm DAVID JOHNSTON

Concert at Orion Centre
Campsie, featuring an
Australian silent film
with Theatre Organ
accompaniment

MARCH

Monday 1 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Sunday 28 at 2.00 pm DAVID PARSONS

Concert at Orion Centre
Campsie

APRIL

Monday 5 at 7.30 pm Committee Meeting

Friday 9 to Monday 12 NATIONAL

CONVENTION OF

THEATRE ORGAN MUSIC

Adelaide



**REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO
2CBA-FM 103.2**

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00pm

For "Theatre Organ Highlights"

Presented by Chris Styles

Editorial

My first task as new editor of TOSA NEWS is to thank Miriam Morris sincerely on behalf of all the members for her wonderful editorial work during the last 18 months. I am sure that we have all appreciated her delightful, artistic work on our magazine which I have always read with pleasure. I realise that it will be hard for me to maintain the high standard that Miriam has set.

Of course, I will do my best to continue her good work and to bring the News to our members in an entertaining and informative format. To do this I will need the help and support of members who have constructive suggestions and interesting contributions to make. Please let me know if you can help in any way with news items, ideas or articles for inclusion in our News.

By way of introduction, I am sorry to say I only joined the society less than 2 years ago. After living in Sydney for 20 years without ever hearing of TOSA's existence, I discovered it by accident, just after the Orion WurliTzer was opened. I joined the Society, hoping to hear a lot more about TOSA concerts and also about the theatre organs in Sydney and elsewhere.

I was also hoping that the society worked towards preserving and restoring other theatre organs, such as those in Castle Hill and Chatswood, but especially the only surviving theatre organ still in its original, Australian location (in Sydney's State Theatre). If you have information or thoughts about these projects, I will be happy to pass them along to the rest of the members. It would be thrilling to hear them playing again. Let's hope our society can help bring this about.

I look forward to getting to know a lot more of the Society's members through communications in this magazine.

Best wishes,
COLIN GROVES



NOTINGS FROM THE A.G.M.

Marrickville Town Hall soon to be refurbished by the Council - hall painted, kitchen remodelled and expanded .

The Hills Centre Christie project still alive but stalled due to lack of funds.

Willoughby Civic Centre WurliTzer project still progressing slowly - may open later this year.

Auburn Town Hall a possible venue for the installation of a theatre organ.

Marrickville WurliTzer to be overhauled during this year - out of action for approximately 3 months.

Cremorne Orpheum's WurliTzer plays on Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings in the main auditorium.

From the President

Hi ! Organ Lovers,

Firstly let me welcome those new members on committee and thank you for the interest shown in the future of the theatre organ in N.S.W. by your willingness to nominate for the position. Also, a vote of thanks to those who served last year but were not able to continue - your support was appreciated.

Now to 1993. It is intended to offer to you, the members, the best available artists in concert on as many different organs as possible. We have been offered access to Epping and Mosman Baptist churches, so this will be an opportunity to hear two different organs.

The A.G.M. was a little disappointing with only approximately 60 in attendance out of a membership of between 550 and 600. This is one of the two occasions in the year when you, the member, can have input into the society. So please try and attend the half-yearly meeting to be held in May.

The big project for 1993, which the members present at the A.G.M. were informed of, is the closing down of the Marrickville organ for a period to allow refurbishment and to do any other vital maintenance work that is required. So during this period all concerts will be held at the Orion Centre, Campsie.

We have had an offer by a committee member to house the society's photo-copier at his home and also to print TOSA News for us. This offer we greatly appreciate as the previous printer, Mr J. Leech, now finds he is unable to print it for us.

Wishing you all a happy, safe and "organically pleasing" New Year from Pearl and myself.

Until next time,

JACK LAWSON
President

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

The deadline for each edition of TOSA News is the 12 th of the month

ORGANS and ORGANISTS

☞ All 5 of the young Ballarat organists who entered demonstration tapes to be included in the Adelaide National Convention's "Tomorrow's Stars Today" were selected to perform.

☞ Clinton White of Canberra played for Gold Coast TOSA in November on their new Rodgers "Olympic" Theatre Organ.

☞ Also, Clinton was the adjudicator for the organ sections of the Royal South Street Competitions, with 60 organists in the electronic section and 29 playing the Compton theatre organ in Ballarat's Her Majesty's Theatre.

☞ Stewart Free was the featured artist in a musical evening in Maher Hall for TOSA Gold Coast.

☞ Neil Jensen will represent Australia at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the UK's Cinema Organ Society in May this year.

☞ Margaret Hall received great reviews for her "Kiiten on the Keys" cassette and her concerts in New Zealand, Canberra, Melbourne and Marrickville.

☞ Blackpool-style organist, Nicholas Martin, from the UK will be touring Australia and New Zealand in July, including a dinner-dance night at the Orion on a Friday and a concert on the Sunday.

☞ Malvern (Vic) Town Hall's recently installed Compton organ has hosted its first Club Night.

☞ Last November Melbourne Town Hall featured silent film classics starring Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton and early film of Melbourne accompanied by David Johnston on the mighty Town Hall organ, followed by tours through the instrumental labyrinth of the organ.

☞ The Blackett Theatre Organ from Cinema North, Reservoir (Vic) seems likely to be installed in the Coburg Town Hall, although the Warragul Organ Club had been keen to purchase the instrument.

*from Vox (Vic), TOSA Action (ACT),
Coupler (Gold Coast), Newsletter (Ballarat),
Tibia (Qld), Newsletter (Gippsland)*

Musical Wrong Notes

"Theatre Organ", the Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society, recently gave some amusing examples of howlers from Grade School essays.

- * A harp is a nude piano.
- * Refrain means don't do it. A refrain in music is the part you'd better not try to sing.
- * J.S. Bach died from 1750 to the present.
- * I know what a sextet is, but I'd rather not say.
- * Music sung by 2 people at the same time is called a duel.
- * An opera is a song of bigly size.
- * Aaron Copeland is one of our most famous contemporary composers. It is unusual to be contemporary. Most composers do not live until they are dead.
- * Henry Purcell is a well-known composer few people have ever heard of.
- * Most authorities agree that music of antiquity was written a long time ago.
- * A virtuoso is a musician with real high morals.
- * Probably the most marvellous fugue was the one between the Hatfields and the McCoys.
- * Agnus Dei was a woman composer famous for her church music.
- * My favorite composer is Opus.
- * Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling him. I guess he could not hear so good.
- * My very best liked piece is the Bronze lullaby
- * Caruso was at first an Italian. Then someone heard his voice and said he would go a long way. And so he came to America.
- * In the last scene of Pagliacci, Canio stabs Nedda who is the one he really loves. Pretty soon Silvio gets stabbed also and they all live happily ever after.
- * Handel was half German, half Italian and half English. He was very large.
- * Beethoven expired in 1927 and later died of this.

From the Treasurer

Dear Members,

At the December 1992 Annual General Meeting, I was elected to the position of Treasurer for the Society. However, you may be wondering who I am as you have never heard of me!

Let me therefore introduce myself. I have been a member of the N.S.W. division for the past 4 or 5 years. Prior to 1987 when my wife, Carol, and I moved to Sydney, we were members of the Victorian Division of TOSA for approximately 10 years and lived quite close to the Moorabbin Town Hall. I actually grew up in Brighton and knew the Dendy Theatre quite well. Carol (nee Beale) was a member of the N.S.W. Division when I met her in 1975.

During my working life, within the shipping industry, I increased my knowledge of accounts procedures, and in 1988 obtained a Certificate in Book-keeping. Currently I am Treasurer for my Church and have done a fair bit of book-keeping in recent times.

Apart from the Theatre Organ, my other interests are in model trains ('N' gauge - British) as well as steam prototypes. Musically, I enjoy Classical and Jazz, and music of the 1950's and 60's. I have an American Harmonium reed organ which has been in the family for over 100 years (purchased second-hand) which I occasionally sit down and play, though I am not of the calibre of some I could name, mainly as I am self-taught and do not use the correct fingering on the keys. A natural bass, I have been known to get up and sing in Church.

Taking over this position of Treasurer, I will endeavour to follow the principles and procedures of my predecessor and promise to keep the Society's books in good order, whether manually or on computer. I do have some ideas on computer presentation which I am working on!

Finally, I look forward to a long and happy association with your committee and with the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (N.S.W. Division) Incorporated in general.

Thank you.
Jim Booker

BURWOOD WURLITZER FINDS A NEW HOME

The Western Suburbs Courier recently ran the accompanying article about the new organ in the Burwood Uniting Church.

The WurliTzer organ referred to in the article was a 2/10 instrument with an interesting history. It had originally been installed in the Kings Cross Theatre and then later in the Hurstville Savoy Theatre. It has been bought by TOSA member, Mr S. McDonald, to be installed in his music room, every Theatre Organ enthusiast's dream!

THE HISTORY OF THE TASMANIAN WURLITZER

In the mid 1920's Madam Tussaud's Waxworks suffered a devastating fire. The management included a cinema in the rebuilding programme and in 1927 a model F instrument (Opus 1716) was installed. For four years it was used on a weekly radio broadcast which made it famous all over England, featuring classical, popular and traditional music.

During the war the cinema was badly damaged in an air-raid and the 2 manual console was ruined. Fortunately, the pipes and other parts of the organ were not damaged. The organ was carefully removed and stored by WurliTzer.

The WurliTzer agent in association with S.J.Wright and son, organ builders, rebuilt the organ including a 3 manual console of French style and used it as a demonstration unit.

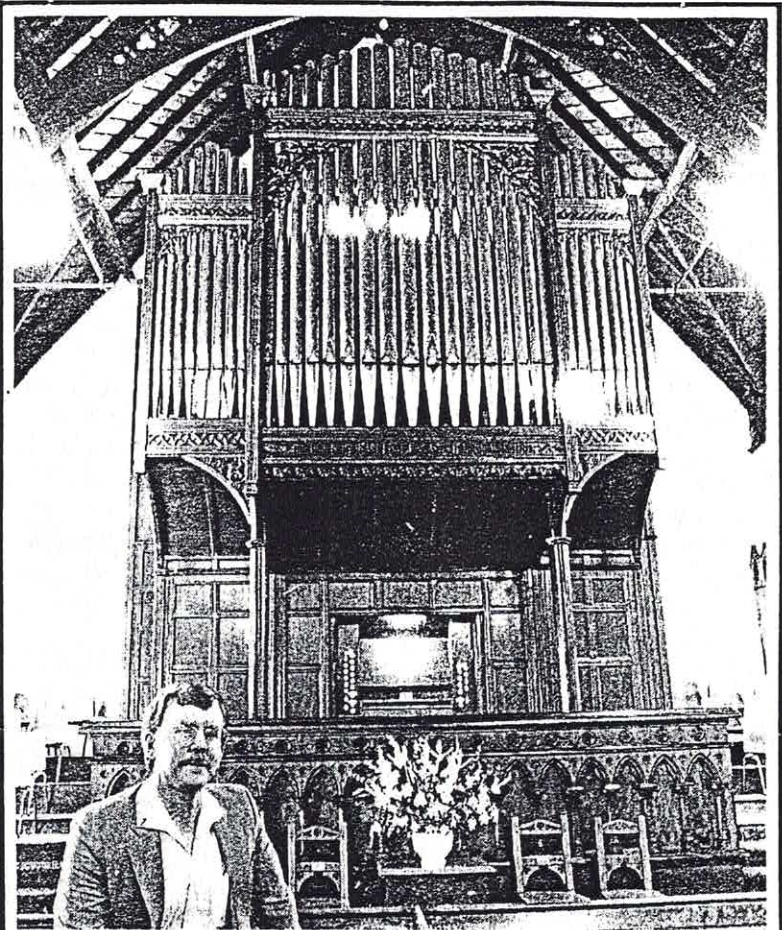
In 1951 the Blackpool Tower Company bought Opus 1716 and installed it in the Palace Ballroom, no doubt inspired by the success of the larger one in the Tower Ballroom. It was also increased in size with provision for 25% more ranks of pipes, i.e. from 8 to 10.

Watson Holmes played at the opening ceremony on 27th June, 1952. Later it was featured on radio with Reginald Dixon, who broadcast a series from each of the 5 theatre organs in Blackpool. The Palace building was demolished in 1960 and the organ was almost scrapped, but at the last moment an enthusiast managed to remove the last pieces with the building almost demolished. Later the Yeovil Theatre Organ Club bought it, with 8 of its ranks still intact. Hubert Selby broadcast from it in 1972.

In 1975 the Theatre Organ Society in Hobart found out from English contacts that the Yeovil Club wished to sell Opus 1716 because they had an option on a larger organ. Some Hobart members formed a syndicate to buy it promptly and brought it out to Hobart. A home was found for it at St Michael's Collegiate School and a number of dedicated members worked on the installation and the opening concert was performed by Len Rawle in November, 1985.

Thanks to the vision and dedication of a relatively small club, many are able to enjoy the sounds of this 3 manual WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ.

From the Newsletter of the Warragul Organ Club Inc., the Gippsland Division of TOSA..



Rev Ian Pearson with the impressive new organ at Burwood Uniting Church.
PHOTO: Ross Willis

Successful church organ 'transplant'

BURWOOD Uniting Church has finally 'transplanted' a 19th century organ in its 1880 building.

The Gray and Davison organ, originally from Wales, has been purchased and restored at an estimated cost of \$140,000.

Replacing the WurliTzer previously used in Uniting Church services which was "on its last legs", it is set to be an attraction for the church.

Difficulties

"It (the WurliTzer) had given unsatisfactory service for at least 10 years," said Rev Pearson, one of the church's two resident ministers.

"The organist (David Powell) had been playing around the difficulties.

"Music is so important for life as it is in the worship of God."

Rev Ian Pearson said it was finally agreed to purchase the 105-year-old organ in 1990.

It was originally built in 1887 for St Deiniol's Church,

By MICHELLE
FRIEDLAND

Criccieth, a village in north-west Wales.

Parish Council members agreed on the cost factor, made easier by "considerable" bequests, Rev Pearson said.

They were convinced that the organ would fit in with the character of the building, which was built within a few years of the organ, and with the needs of worshippers.

The organ was rededicated by President of the Uniting Church Dr D'Arcy Wood in a service held recently at the church.

Rev Pearson said the organ had an ornate oak case and one of the finest trumpet stops in Sydney.

He said the instrument contained 20 ranks of pipes, totalling an estimated 2,880.

Engraved on the front awning is the rhyme: "The Music in My Heart I Bore, Long After It Was Heard No More."

The following marvellous article was written by the well-known organist, John Atwell, and published in the November issue of VOX for TOSA (Vic). I am sure that a lot of our members have made similar interesting visits.

A Visit to the Fox Theatre, Detroit

I am sure there are many members of TOSA who could trace their early interest in the theatre organ to the days when it was relatively commonplace to see and hear them filling the majestic portals of some ornate movie palace. Unfortunately, in the main, those days are long gone. Sydney still has its State Theatre complete with organ (though I believe in rather lamentable condition). Melbourne's Regent is still shuttered with a faint hope of restoration. And that's about it in Australia. Most of the other major theatres have gone! The Hayden Orpheum at Cremorne is a relative newcomer which positively sparkles. But I'm talking about the big city houses. Earlier this year I happened to visit the auditorium of Auckland's Civic Theatre. As I mentioned in Vox some months ago, I had again something of the feeling I used to have as a young student when I entered the Regent, Adelaide for the Saturday matinee. There is nothing quite like that feeling of being in a large movie theatre, especially when it has a soul - sometimes called a theatre pipe organ.

Imagine how I felt when the opportunity arose to visit the fabulous Fox Theatre in Detroit, Michigan during my recent visit to the USA. I had read in the American magazines of the theatre's refurbishment in recent years and the reports that the organ has never been sounding better. But I do not think I was quite prepared for my reaction to walking into a theatre of 5,047 seats that looked as though it had been opened the previous week. Let me tell you about my experience.

Let us back up a little first and put this place in perspective. Detroit originally had nine major movie theatres in the downtown area. Of these only three appear to have been saved from oblivion. Some have been torn down, others are empty and deteriorated. In many cases, theatres have been torn down only to have the site tarred over for a parking lot. At the Michigan Theatre site, however, they didn't even bother to pull down the theatre. They built the parking lot inside the shell of the old building. And so these days you can park your car near an archway which could have led to the organ chambers which originally housed a 5/28 Wurlitzer!

The Fox was the last of the movie palaces to be built in the downtown area. Sadly these days, this area is dying. There are now no major department stores open in the downtown area; all have moved to the malls in the outlying suburbs. Huge multistorey buildings lie closed and shuttered on the main city thoroughfares. It made me realize how important it is for Melbourne to retain a vibrant centre. It would take a major effort to restore the life in a dead heart. One man is attempting to do that in



The Fox marquee and main entrance facing the paved Woodward Ave.

Detroit, Mike Illitch, founder of Little Caesar International. The empire consists of a multitude of pizza restaurants and take-away stores across the USA and Europe. He also owns the Detroit Hockey team, the Redwings and the Baseball team, the Tigers. Mr Illitch is attempting to coax Detroit residents back to the downtown area and so decided to make his corporate offices in the Fox building and to completely restore both the offices and theatre and buildings in the surrounding area. At his expense he also paved Woodward Avenue outside his theatre with fancy bricks, as well as building a large parking garage next door to the Fox so the patrons could safely walk to the theatre. And what a restoration it has been. Sixty years of dirt and grime have been washed off all the surfaces inside the theatre, so the place glistens like it would have on opening night. All seats have been recovered with special fabric with the Fox emblem woven in the back, and so on.

Organist Lance Luce, my son, David and I entered the side door of the theatre to meet the security guard. After he spoke over a walkie-talkie, we were issued with passes and were met by our guide, Greg, whose surname escapes me. Greg has been with the theatre restoration since the early stages, so he was able to fill us in on the extent of the rubbish and filth that had to go out the door to get the theatre in its present



Lance Luce at the console of the 4/36 Fox Wurlitzer

condition. I remarked that our security passes are a far cry from the rumours which I had heard from previous days that one did not wander in the darkened parts of the theatre as people were supposed to have been living inside the structure. Greg informed us that through all the time of the restoration, they found no evidence of current or previous squatters. Gone was the gum which previously littered the carpets to an extent where your feet felt like they were stuck. Much of the current carpet is new, having been milled to the original elephant design.

Greg took us through a stark black painted corridor, out through a brass door and into the gigantic foyer. It was breathtaking. Giant marble colonnades stood guard on either side, reaching up to a richly hued ceiling of myriad facets and niches. We were told that some of these columns were refinished at the base where once they had been hacked into to fit in a candy bar. The style is described as Siamese/Byzantine, and although each individual feature is a little coarse, the whole thing combines to be absolutely stunning. In a balcony on one side of the foyer is the console of the 3/12 Moller used to entertain the waiting patrons. Moving towards the auditorium you are faced with a staircase to the upstairs foyer guarded by two

lions. Greg told us that the ornate terrazzo floor on which we were standing had never previously been seen as it had previously been covered by a huge carpet.

We bypassed the staircase and walked through some stunning brass doors into the lower inner foyer. Here oval shaped openings in the ceiling, somewhat like in the Palais Theatre, St Kilda, revealed the glories of the upper balcony. As we entered the back of the auditorium, everything was quite dim, but you could make out the vastness of the seats in front of you. Greg stooped by the computer controlled lighting panel halfway down the stalls to turn on some lights. Slowly as the lights came up it was as if the theatre was coming alive. The decoration around the proscenium was most spectacular, but it wasn't until you passed the line of the balcony above and looked up that you realized how immense the auditorium was. You gaze upward to the open sky framed by a jewelled and tasselled tent-like ceiling supported by spears. The main chandelier is a huge 13 feet diameter orb of gilded pot metal and art glass lit by 210 light bulbs. The marble columns in the foyer are repeated either side of the stage in grand style. Everything glistens, even the coloured glass jewels set in the figures which line the auditorium. Greg showed us a series

of different light changes, each for different effect, usually lighting a different feature of the vast house.

Despite all the opulence, the magnet was sitting in the centre of the orchestra lift - a 4/36 Wurlitzer-Fox Special. This is one of five near identical instruments created by the company for the largest Fox Theatres in the country. The prototype was in the New York Paramount Theatre. The Detroit instrument is completely original. It is powered by two 50hp Spencer blowers and fills seven chambers, three to the left of the stage and four to the right. The organ grills are located between the columns, from the fifth to seventh floor levels of the auditorium.

Lance was as keen as I was to try the organ, so I indicated for him to go first while I took some shots of the console. I regret that I did not have the correct equipment to take shots of the auditorium. And what does a 4/36 Wurlitzer sound like in its original location? Just wonderful! That is not to say that things cannot be improved. Money is actually being spent on the instrument now to improve regulation and clarify some of the more softer and subtle tones of the organ. Shutters now open more than they ever did so the clarity of the instrument is greatly improved. So eventually the organ will sound better than it ever has. The

story goes that some of the ranks were never even voiced properly when they went into the theatre. Perhaps the installation crew never bothered to do a thorough job of tonally finishing the organ. It was late 1928 and silent movies were out anyway. This is borne out by two other observations. Apparently the combination action on the console has always suffered from a lack of wind due to small diameter pipe to the console. This has never been rectified.

The other is that until recently the entire horseshoe area behind the stops was all unfinished timber, no lacquer, nothing. It has since been lovingly french polished but as a reminder of the earlier days there is still a small piece of timber moulding down by the pedal stops with the original non-finish.

The sound at the console was certainly not overwhelming. It was a classic case of the organist not being in the best position (a bit like Malvern). However when you went back into the balcony at the level of the chambers, it was quite a different story. The organ leapt out of those chambers with a gorgeous velvety sound that you just do not get in a small building.

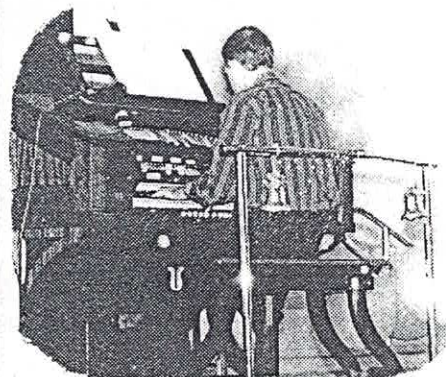
And what was it like to play? Well, I still find it hard to believe that I have been there. All I can say is it was a buzz. Just great! With the piston action unreliable, hand setting was the order of the day, and unfortunately, one tends to 'whack everything on', or stop to effect the desired tonal colour change. But all still a great theatre organ experience.

I have now played three of these 4/36 consoles - the former San Francisco Fox instrument when it was installed in Frank Lanterman's home in La Canada, California, this baby, and later in my trip the console of the Brooklyn Fox instrument, now controlling a different set of pipes (48 ranks in all) just south of Seattle. The last of these will be the subject of another article later on. All are enormous, much larger than the standard 4/21 console like we have at Moorabbin. They are positively compact by comparison. On these Fox specials, you have to extend you arm fully or lean slightly forward to touch the stop rails. Likewise you are grateful for the glass music rack base as it is necessary to read up through this to get the last line of your manuscript.

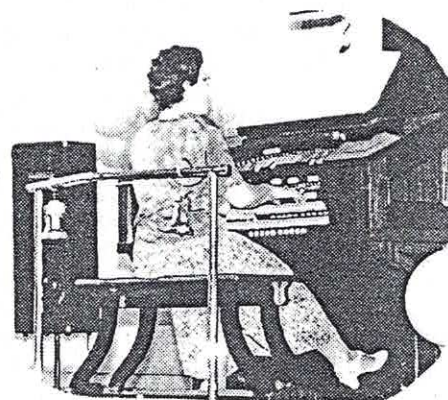
It was all a great experience and one which I will not forget in a hurry. Needless to say my son got bored after a while, possibly a combination of the high humidity in the auditorium and the effects of jet lag. We had flown from Melbourne to Detroit the previous day. But even he admitted that he was knocked out by the whole thing, having seen nothing like this before.

I now intend to watch again the video of *The Ultimate Event*, featuring Sammy Davis Jnr, Lisa Minelli and Frank Sinatra, for much of it was recorded at the Detroit Fox, and if I remember rightly there are some great scenes in the foyer as well as wonderful shots of the auditorium. Unfortunately there is no organ! But still if you don't think you'll ever get to Detroit, search out a copy of this video and you will see what I have been talking about.

ORGANISTS AT OUR MEMBERS' PARTY



CHRIS STYLES



WENDY HAMBLY



BILL SCHUMACHER



PETER HELD



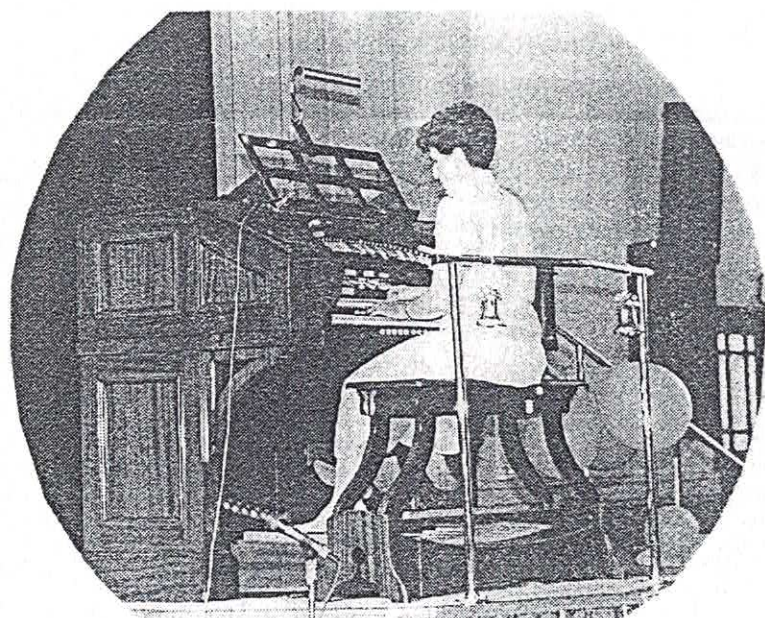
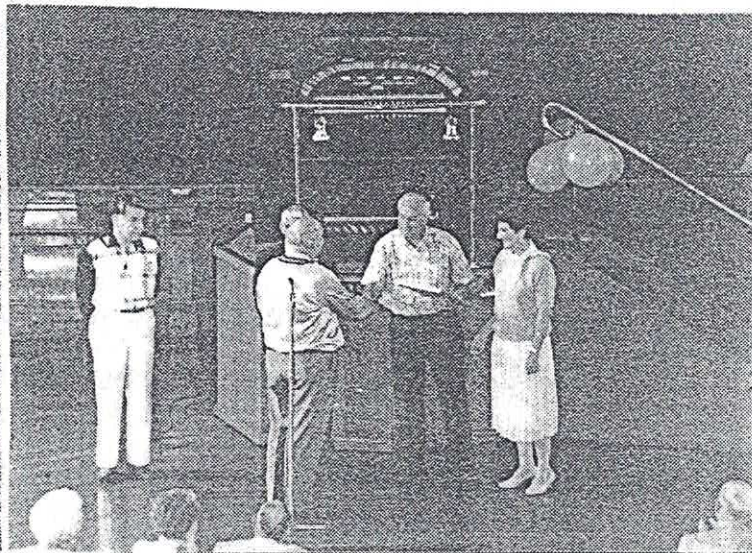
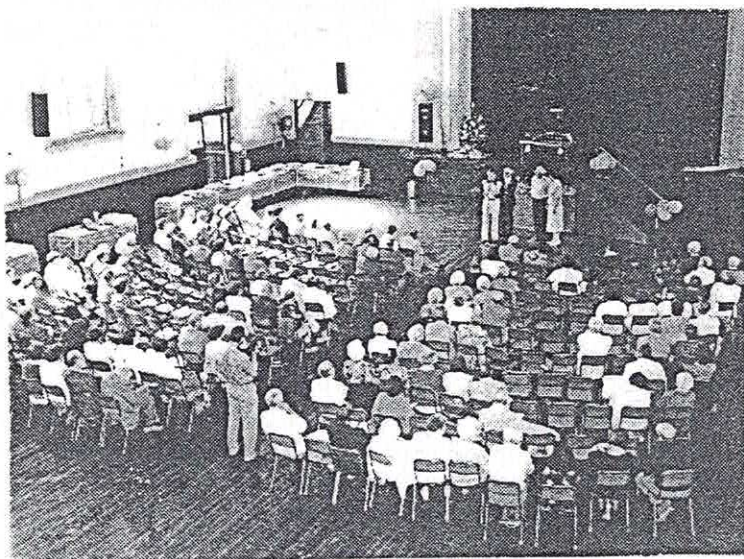
IAN DAVIES

Photos by Barry Tooker at Marrickville Town Hall, Sunday 15th November

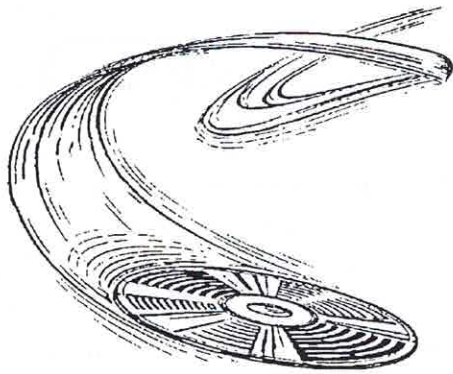
HONOURED GUESTS AT THE MEMBERS' PARTY

Russ and Jo-Ann Evans were made Life Members of TOSA at the Members' Party, held at Marrickville Town Hall on Sunday, 15th November, 1992. This was in recognition of the wonderful work they have performed over many years, supplying a lot of Australian organs with parts. After the presentation Jo-Ann was invited to play, which she did delightfully without having any time to familiarise herself with the Marrickville WurliTzer.

The Evans of Seattle belong to the Puget Sound Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. Their ATOS Chapter has been responsible for introducing a number of Australian artists to their members. These artists include Bill Schumacher, Neil Jensen, Margaret Hall, John Giacchi, John Atwell and Tony Fenelon.



Photos by Barry Tooker at Marrickville Town Hall, Sunday 15th November



Record Bar News

by Neil Palmer

****PARAMOUNT ON PARADE****

Jim Riggs at the Oakland Paramount Wurlitzer. Tracks include : Paramount On Parade, Warner Bros Medley, Rio Rita, On a Slow Boat to China, Cole Porter Selection, My Funny Valentine, plus more.

Compact Disc : \$ 25.00 Cassette : \$ 15.00

****GRANADA****

Jim Riggs plays the Grande Barton Organ. Tracks include : Granada, Can This Be Love, Remembering Duke Ellington, Once In a While, Deep Night, plus more.

Compact Disc : \$ 25.00 Cassette : \$ 15.00

****SINGIN' IN THE BATHTUB****

Jim Riggs at the Alabama Theatre Wurlitzer. Tracks include : Singin' in the Bathtub, Oh Gee! Oh Gosh!, Four Pieces by Raymond Scott, Selections from "Shall We Dance", plus more.

Available on CASSETTE ONLY : \$ 15.00

An Old Favourite Returns! This time on CD!
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THE MELBOURNE REGENT'S WURLITZERS

It is interesting to note that *Interval at the Regent* was actually recorded on the second Wurlitzer to be installed there. The first instrument was a 4 manual 21 rank style 270 special Wurlitzer which was installed for the theatre's opening in 1928 and had a specification similar to the State Theatre Wurlitzers in Melbourne and Sydney. Patron of TOSA NSW Division, Ian Davies, fondly remembers this organ as having an exceptionally fine tone. Unfortunately this instrument was lost when fire completely destroyed the Regent's auditorium in 1945.

However this was not to be the end of the Regent or its theatre organ presentations. Within a couple of years, the theatre was rebuilt and it was decided that a replacement instrument would be found. By this time Hoyts had taken control of the Ambassadors Theatre, Perth, from Greater Union, which happened to have a 3 manual 15 rank Wurlitzer. The instrument was removed and transported to Melbourne for installation in the Regent.

The console was modified to accept a fourth manual, and four additional ranks of pipes were added. These components came from Melbourne's Lyceum Theatre. Theatre organ presentations were once again reinstated.

The Console had been rising on its own lift on the left of the stage, but things changed when Cinemascope arrived in 1953. A new false proscenium was erected over the rising pit to accommodate the new wide screen. The Console had to be moved and it was relocated to the left Opera Box. Eventually it was discovered that the Cinemascope screen would fit in the original Proscenium and the false one was dismantled. However, the Console was to remain in the Opera Box.

Theatre Organ presentations declined during the late 50's and by 1961 the instrument was to sustain long periods of silence. At this point, the following organists had been associated with the theatre organ presentations at the Regent : Stanley Wallace (from USA), Eileen McCarthy, Eddie Fitch, Stan Seddon, Lionel Corrick, Will Westbrook, Charles Tuckwell, Mervyn Welch (the last organist to play the original 4 manual Wurlitzer), Len Davis, Ian Davies, Horace Weber, Geoff Robertson, Stanfield Holliday (who made several recordings at the Regent).

After a special performance on Christmas Eve 1964, Tony Fenelon was appointed resident organist and remained there until the instrument was sold and removed after the farewell performance on Sunday, 12th January, 1969.

During his time at the Regent, Tony had made private recordings of the instrument which were eventually released on 4 LP records : *Academy Award Winners, With a Song in My Heart, More Tony Fenelon* (all now collectors' items) and *Interval at the Regent*.

As for the Wurlitzer itself, it is privately owned and still in storage. The Regent Theatre building is still standing, having been closed since 1970 and stripped of its furniture and fittings, and after all these years there is still controversial debate over its future.

MARRICKVILLE WURLITZER OVERHAUL

Members who attended the Annual General Meeting were advised that the Committee has approved the refurbishing to be carried out on the Marrickville Wurlitzer during 1993. The work will include repairs / voicing to pipework, new windlines, additional regulators, and moving some items to gain better access. Also, the Console housing will be looked at.

Naturally, for this work to be done, the organ will have to be closed down for a period of time and those with a regular practice slot will be advised when this is about to happen.

Neil Palmer

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President's Annual Report, 1992

Usually a report should start at the beginning and flow to an obvious end, but on this occasion I would like to start in the middle and then weave the report into its chronological order of events concerning this society.

Prior to the Half-Yearly General Meeting Mr. Jack Lawson, for reasons best known to himself, found it necessary to resign from the position of President and I was approached by Mr. Frank Ellis on behalf of the Committee to accept and fill the position until the Annual General Meeting for 1992. After careful thought I agreed to the wishes of the Committee and at the Half-Yearly General Meeting informed the members present that at this stage I was a caretaker President and would review my option to nominate for the position later as the year was drawing to a close. This I have done and my decision not to seek re-election is based on matters arising outside the society.

During 1992 the Committee has arranged the presentation of seven concerts to date and the following artists were presented to entertain members with a variety of Theatre organ music in their own expressive playing styles.

Let me list them for you :-

January: Cliff Bingham; March: Simon Gledhill; May: Don Thompson, Tony Fenelon and John Atwell; June: Bill Schumacher; August: Charity Concert; September: Jim Riggs; October: Margaret Hall; November: Christmas Party. I am sure that you will agree with me that our local artists performed equally as well as our guest artists from overseas.

The Charity Concert, presented in August, was an outstanding success both financially and entertainment wise and featured Neil Jensen, John Giacchi, Helen Zerefos, the Yellow Rolls Royce Band and the Canterbury Theatre Guild. The proceeds (including total door takings and donations) amounting to \$5,000.00 was presented to St. Vincents Hospital to support the work of the Aids Ward.

The Opera House Administration invited TOSA to participate in a presentation named "Cultural Capers-1992" and this was seen as an

opportunity to promote the Society to members of the public and at the same time attract new members into TOSA. The Committee prepared a display featuring photographs of Theatre Organs and Organists from around the world together with posters advertising the society's activities and a Music Bar where video tapes, compact discs and audio tapes were available for purchase. A repeat of this display was presented at the Orion Centre in conjunction with the Jim Riggs concert.

During September, visiting artist Jim Riggs, in conjunction with the Society, conducted a workshop for school children which consisted of a very informative description of the role of the Theatre organ, its console and pipe chambers, a cross section of music to demonstrate the versatility of the instrument and finally a silent movie with organ accompaniment. A number of schools were invited to attend and one hundred and fifty children plus teachers attended. Top marks to TOSA and Jim Riggs for the presentation.

During November the Committee planned and presented a Christmas Party afternoon with a twist for its members. It was requested that members bring a small toy and place it under the Christmas tree and these presents would be donated to a charity to brighten some less fortunate children's Christmas. At the following monthly Committee meeting the Salvation Army was chosen to distribute these gifts from members. Organists Chris Styles, Wendy Hambly, Bill Schumacher and Peter Held presented a varied and entertaining selection of music throughout the afternoon and our Patron, Ian Davies, played for a special dance segment following afternoon tea. I am sure, from the comments passed at the close of the afternoon, a good time was had by all who attended.

During the year members had a number of opportunities to play our 3/17 WurliTzer at the Orion Centre Campsie on Club Nights and rest assured that these functions will be continued in 1993.

Because of difficulties being experienced by our then Treasurer Bob Gilmour to finalise accounts for presentation at the monthly meeting of the Committee (1st Monday each month), this date was changed to the third Monday beginning in October and this arrangement resolved the problem.

The Treasurer's Report shows the

Society's position to be satisfactory and because of sound judgement and good financial management the Committee is now in a position to refurbish the Marrickville WurliTzer Theatre Organ. The November monthly Committee meeting decided to initiate this move and prepared the ground work for the incoming 1993 Committee to act upon. It is estimated that the work will commence on this project about March or April, 1993, and the organ will be out of service for approximately three months. A first, rough estimate of cost is in the order of \$20,000 to \$25,000.

At the November Christmas Party Russ and Jo Evans, two American members of our society who have provided outstanding assistance to the Theatre Organ Society of Australia and in particular our own division, were presented with a Gilt framed Certificate of Appreciation for their efforts and in addition Life Membership in the New South Wales Division was conferred upon them. Because of the particular circumstances surrounding this event it was not possible to advertise the Committee's decision in TOSA News prior to the event.

In conclusion I would like to THANK my Committee for their support so freely given to me during my short term as President. Their understanding and patience were appreciated and helped me fit comfortably into my role. To all those people who were my support groups in their various roles at concerts and other functions, "Thank you all for a job well done". I would say that we were a good team who got the job done with a minimum of fuss, and I appreciated your efforts and encouragement when things got tough. To the members of the Society I would like to say that I enjoyed my term as your President and I hope that you received satisfaction and enjoyment from the results of your Committee's efforts during 1992.

To the incoming Committee and its Executive, I extend my congratulations on accepting the responsibility for guiding the Society through the coming year and I wish you every success, so that this Division of TOSA will enjoy prosperity in all its endeavours.

Finally may I wish each and every member of TOSA and their families a Happy New Year.

Bob Staunton,
Retiring President.

Secretary's Annual Report, 1992

At the beginning of this year, February in fact, I advised the committee that I would not be re-nominating at the end of the year - due to family and other commitments and, although I did re-nominate this year my family and other commitments are my reasons for withdrawing my nomination. I have worked for the society for 3 years and thoroughly enjoyed being active in the society. Mary Stewart is very willing to take over as Secretary and knows what it is all about. She is a very capable and competent lady and I wish her well. Her timetable enables her to take delivery of everything to do with TOSA that is presently in my home next Wednesday and as I live on the top floor of a block of units I have arranged for a professional carrier to do the job at no cost to TOSA.

The filing, correspondence up to, and including, the last committee meeting and anything since then which required immediate attention has been dealt with. Minutes of all the meetings are posted in the Minute Book.

The arrival of Bob Staunton on the scene as President some 6 months ago was a tremendous boost for the Society and for me personally. His new ideas and work effort were tremendous - the day at the Opera House was a clear indication of his versatility and desire to bring the Society and its aims before the general public. Afternoon tea at the Orion was another innovation which proved very popular with members although not so easy to administer as at Marrickville. Bob's encouragement of the young people in the Society is well-known and his workshops are renowned - I thank you most sincerely, Bob, for the opportunity of serving with you during the past 6 months.

To each and everyone of my fellow committee members during the past year, my sincere thanks for your support and friendship.

My special thanks go to Jeff Clark, our Membership Secretary, who has this year sent out reminder notices to all those members who had not paid their subs, and it is paying dividends. To Miriam Morris, a lady of great fortitude and strength, for her production of TOSA News each month, to Jack Leech for his printing of TOSA News, to Mary and Arthur Hall for continuing to distribute TOSA News every month, to Ed Wharton, our front man, for his tremendous public relations as Ticket Secretary, to Karl Zipsin for his help with the ticketing and putting away after concerts, to Kevin Rowlands for his photography at the concerts and donations time after time, to Barry Tooker for his videos and photography at the concerts. Eunice and Merv Palmer, Frank and Edith Rohanek who contributed so much to the success of our concert days, Kevin Garvin, Paul Luchi, John Atkins, who willingly come early to prepare for our concerts. To all the members who have helped serve afternoon tea and clear up afterwards, thank you again.

I wish the new committee which takes over after tonight a very happy and successful 1993 and I extend the Compliments of the Season to you all.
Thank you.

Jean Taylor
Retiring Secretary

**Remember
Members
Club Night
3rd February
at the
Orion Centre.
Come ready
to play
the Wurlitzer
or
to listen**

Letter to the Editor

Allan Tassaker, who apparently lives in a Post Office box in North Strathfield, has written to offer to supply a "joke" per month for TOSA News.

He writes :

"As I am a recently joined member, and a chap with a sense of humour... I was wondering if you had room in the magazine for a humorous snippet. Or two. Perhaps one in each edition. Let's face it. I would only have to come up with twelve to take care of the whole year.

"I have worded each one in a complete style as it would appear in the magazine.... if it gets past you!"

Then 12 "humorous snippets", follow with an instruction for me to "screw this paper up and throw it in the trash can" if I was not laughing after the first 4 items.

Well, Allan, "it has got past me" (although my sense of humour was strained to the limit) and I've decided to create a section ESPECIALLY for your jokes, as follows :

CORN CORNER



Allan Tassaker, a fairly new member, reckons he may have to give up playing the organ... he has just heard that the local hospital wants people to "donate their organs".

Remember there are another 11 "humorous snippets" like this to come, unless the groaning gets too loud for the readers to bear! Aaaaaaaaaaagh!

BOOK NOW FOR DAVID JOHNSTON'S CONCERT !

BOOKING FORM ON BACK PAGE

Profile of David Johnston

David Johnston is well-known to our regular concert-goers for his entertaining concerts, his engaging personality and his skill in providing theatre organ accompaniment for silent films. His exceptional talent as a musician, combined with a flair for showmanship, have justly earned him a reputation as being Australia's most entertaining organist.

David was born into a musical family, his father also being an accomplished organist. As a young boy it was his ambition to follow in his father's footsteps and become an organist (if he could not get a job as a train driver!)

His first appointment as an organist was at Melbourne's Dendy Theatre, later to become the home of the Theatre Organ Society's famous Capitol WurliTzer organ. He also turned his attention to Electrical Engineering studies, while continuing to work part-time as a musician. He was able to combine his musical and engineering skills by working with musical

instrument companies - demonstrating, selling, managing, servicing and repairing instruments. He worked with numerous theatrical companies and developed a skill for which he is regarded as Australia's foremost exponent - accompanying silent movies.

For 10 years David was Musical Director of Melbourne's famous "Naughty Nineties Music Hall", whilst upgrading his qualifications in Electronic Engineering and Computer Electronics, studies which are now of great value to him with the growing application of computers in musical composition, in performance and in the instruments themselves.

The demands on his talent have made David something he never intended to be - a full-time professional musician. He is the Musical Director of the "Bull 'n Bush Music Hall", "John Hancock's Music Hall", plays regularly for organ clubs and societies throughout Australia, and is organist and Musical Adviser to the Melbourne

"Carols by Candlelight". David particularly enjoys working with young people and was a National Adviser to the "Youth of Australia" movement, contributing to their monthly magazine, "Keyboard World", and is a Consultant to the Board of the Australian Guild of Music and Speech.

David was chosen to play the first-ever theatre organ concert as a part of the world renowned "Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord", and has been invited to serve on the Melbourne Town Hall Organ Restoration Committee under the direction of the American virtuoso Carlo Curley. He was president of the Victorian Division of TOSA and is Patron of the Western Australian Division of TOSA.

In his spare time he pursues another interest, that of fully instrument rated private pilot. His love of flying has taken him to many parts of Australia and serves as a convenient means of getting from one concert location to the next.

The Kids Stakes

A feature of David Johnston's concert will be the screening of the 1927 black and white Australian silent film, "The Kids Stakes", accompanied by the Mighty WurliTzer. This is what the original Theatre Organs were designed for, of course, and this concert provides an opportunity for us to experience the magic of the silent film era.

"The Kids Stakes" is based on the comic strip by Sid Nichols, who

appears in the opening scene, "The Kids Stakes" depicts the essentially innocent lives of the 1920's city dwellers, using locations around Woolloomooloo.

The complete print was restored by members of the Sydney University Film Group in the early fifties, after it had been cut into 20 minute segments for screening as comedy shorts.

David has provided the Theatre Organ accompaniment for this film on previous occasions to universal applause and rave reviews. Our members are assured of an interesting afternoon's entertainment.

It is always fascinating to see the Theatre Organ being used as was originally intended and this comedy film contains lots of laughs for all ages and nostalgic views of 1920's Sydney.

WANTED : TOSA requires the services of someone willing to become our Box Office Manager / Ticket Secretary. This matter is urgent. Anyone who feels they could help should contact our President, Jack Lawson, on 569 3775.

TRANSPORT : If you would be prepared to bring another member of our society to a concert please let us know, so that we can help arrange transport for people in your vicinity who would otherwise be unable to attend.