



DAVID PARSONS
IN
CONCERT

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

ADDRESS BOX A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH, 2000

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TUESDAY 13th MAY

MUSICAL EVENING.

The Society Patron Ian Davies has arranged an evening of fine music at The Bondi Junction- Waverley R.S.L. Club Grey Street Bondi Junction commencing at 7.30 pm. The music will be supplied by Eric Smith, David Parsons, Bill Schumacher and our host Ian Davies, Eric Smith is bringing an associate artist along with him, Simon Ellis. Those who attended the convention concert at the Lyceum will remember the musical ability also the fine singing voice of this young gentleman and will want to hear him again. The management of the club make the auditorium available on this occasion and there is no charge for this great night of music with such a wonderful array of talent. A point of interest for those who have not Visited this R.S.L. Club the organ installed here is a Rodgers Trio a fine three manual instrument speaking through two speaker cabinets mounted in stereo fashion either side of the stage proscenium. Come along and have a great night out, Drinks will be available from the bar if required. Hope to see you all there.

SUNDAY 18th MAY

MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL 2.30 P.M.

David Parsons will be featured in concert on the society Wurlitzer in Marrickville town hall, much has been written about David's musical ability and I feel sure that those who have heard him will want to do so again and those who have not had the pleasure will be well rewarded by a visit to Marrickville on this date.

Tickets for this concert are available from the ticket secretary on the form provided at the back of this issue,

ADMISSION Adults \$4.00. Members \$3.00. Pensioners & children \$2.00.

TUESDAY 20th. MAY CLUB NIGHT MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL 7.30.P.M.

On this date you will have another opportunity to gather around your organ in an informal atmosphere to hear and enjoy it in a situation outside the formal concert type performance also you the player will have an opportunity to have a play on it.

Member David Parsons will be in attendance at this club night to give a short and informative talk on registration and playing techniques which will be very helpful to all up and coming organists, and who knows we may even be able to talk him into playing a number or two for us. The ladies will serve supper during the evening so rollup and make these nights a successful event to be held on a regular basis.

FRIDAY 6TH JUNE CABARET MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL 6.45.P.M.

The mid-year cabaret will be held on this date and it is hoped that all members will come along and bring a friend or two. These functions have been featured regularly over the last five or six years and have become a very popular venue where you have the chance to dance on what was recognised as one of Sydney's premier dance floors to the society's Wurlitzer pipe organ which will be in the capable hands of our patron Mr Ian Davies. The evening commences at 6.45 p.m. sherry and biscuits will be available at the door as you arrive, then a bracket of dancing before you sit down to a three course meal, this will be followed by more dancing during one of the breaks you will have a chance to experience a small taste of nostalgia when some theatre song slides will be shown on the screen and we can sing along to the organ. All that you need to bring is whatever you may require in the way of liquid refreshments. Dress is optional. Cost \$17.50. a Double \$8.75. a single. Make up your party and book now with Mrs P. Tooker 114 Mitchell st, Croydon Park. You will find a booking form at the back of the April issue of T.O.S.A. NEWS, Phone enquiries 74-1535 or 569-3775.

THURSDAY 29 TH MAY. VARIETY CONCERT WESLEY CHAPEL. 7.30.P.M.

Mr Eric Smith advises that there will be a variety concert at the WESLEY CHAPEL 139 Castlereagh St, Sydney on the above date and this will feature the recently rebuilt 2 manual 6 rank Hill Norman & Beard organ installed there-in. The concert will feature Eric Smith and guest organists and soloists. This will be a rare and exciting chance to hear this organ being used for other than church work.

Admission \$5.00 Adults \$3.00. Pensioners, students & children.

SUNDAY 20.TH. JULY. HOME PARTY 2.30.P.M.

Another opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of one of our members homes. This time at the residence of MR & MRS J. Guthrie. 11 Millett St, Hurstville

Cost for afternoon is Gents \$2.00. Ladies \$1.50. plus a plate for supper. Book early by ringing 577764 after 5.30.p.m. as seating is limited to 30.

FRIDAY 8TH. AUGUST LATE NIGHT MOVIES 11.30.P.M.

A Special screening will take place at the Lyceum Theatre with Eric Smith at the Console of the Christie Theatre organ.

Organ music commences at 11.30.p.m. The evening is in aid of Spring Fair Candidates. The programme consists of 1920's Newsreel & Funnies Intermission with the organ, followed by the main feature film Phantom of the Opera with Lon Chaney, accompanied by Eric Smith. Back to the twenties apparel may be worn.

SUNDAY 17TH AUGUST ORGAN INSPECTION 2.00.P.M.

An inspection of the Grand Organ in the Sydney Town Hall has been arranged on this date. This is a rare and unique opportunity to inspect this fine instrument, the above inspection has been arranged for members and friends with the co-operation of the organ builder Mr Roger Pogson, and the assistant city organist - Theatre, our good friend David Parsons. Those who are interested in making this tour should write to the Secretary at the post office Box A 584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH 2000.

Those already listed for the tour are:-

H.Smith, M.Dickens, F.Hickson, D.McDonald(8), O.Wing (2) E.Hillier (2)
K.Collins, S.Bosanquet, E.Vale, M.Hall.

Book now and be sure not to miss this wonderful opportunity.

WEEK - END COACH TOUR OF THE HUNTER VALLEY An interesting and somewhat different outing has been organised for members. Details are set out below: Coach departs Marrickville Town Hall at 6.30p.m. Friday 24th October, 1980. Travelling via the Pacific Highway to Newcastle where Bed & Breakfast are arranged.

SATURDAY 25th OCTOBER, TOUR OF POKOLBIN Vinyard district. Lunch and inspection of Wyndham Estate or Hungerford (this detail to be finalised), Dinner, Bed & Breakfast back at Newcastle.

SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER, proceed to Swan Bay oyster farm where you will be taken by launch to view the Leases. Seafood luncheon provided. The coach on the return trip will stop at Peats Ridge for afternoon tea thence on to Marrickville Town Hall, arriving at approximately 5.30.p.m. The cost of this tour is \$76.00. which includes all lunches, dinner, bed & breakfast, plus all tours and inspections. The fare DOES NOT include morning and afternoon teas. A deposit of \$10.00 is required when making your booking and the final payment of balance to be made by 26th September, 1980 (please make cheques payable to T.O.S.A.) People interested in this week-end please contact Mrs Phyl Wilson 120 Dennis street, Lakemba 2195 or phone 759.6050. Fare and Itinerary subject to alteration.

YOU ARE ADVISED TO BOOK SOON AS THE COACH IS FILLING RAPIDLY.

WATCH THESE COLUMNS FOR IMPORTANT NEWS IN RELATION TO THE VISIT BY AN IMPORTANT OVERSEAS GUEST ORGANIST LATER THIS YEAR.

DIRECTORY

PATRON: Ian Davies PRESIDENT: Alan Misdale (525.5554)
VICE PRESIDENTS: Doug Smith, (750.0917), Frank Ellis, (649.7011),
SECRETARY: Ernie Vale, (798.6816), TREASURER: Edna Smith, (529.7379),
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Ron Smith, (529.7379), PRACTICE CONVENOR: Chris Palmer,
RESEARCH & ARCHIVES: Ian Cameron. RECORDING ENGINEER: Ray Garrett (869.7247)
EDITOR: Jack Lawson (569.3775).

FOR SALE

BARGAINS FOR EXPERIMENTERS

Quantity of organ parts:- (Remnants of Julius Organ Manufacturing).
Includes Keyboards- 13 note pedal boards - Valves - Chokes - Trimpots,
etc-etc- also metal parts etc.

Best Offer to \$400.00.

For inspection ring 783388. 9.00A.M. till 4.30.P.M.
or 509927 after hours

PERSONAL COLUMN.

I have received a letter from member Peter Held thanking me for the mention of his father's passing, and in it he asked to convey to all those members who so kindly sent him sympathy cards his personal thanks as he was unable to thank them all individually. Peter also is especially grateful to those fellow members and friends who not only attended the Mass at Balmore but were with him at the graveside at Rookwood.

Two Names Honoured.

Current HOT LINE news has revealed that the Western Australian Division have recently bestowed the Honour of Life Membership upon two of their members, namely Ray Clements and Alan Doodson.

These two men are well recognised names in the Theatre Organ Society around Australia, and for W.A. to bestow this honour is a fitting reward for Ray and Alan for their dedication and service over the years. our heartiest congratulations to Ray Clements and Alan Doodson from all in New South Wales

Doug Smith (Hon Vice-President)

NEW MEMBERS.

Margaret Surplice, Caringbah. Ken French Bankstown. Dennis Waugh Blacktown. Vi Dalgleish Peakhurst. Norman & Jean Booth Baulkham Hills. Stephen & Patricia Mortimer Beverley Hills Vi & Ted Broadley Lampton. Lois Bilby Rosebery. To all these new members we extend a warm greeting and look forward to meeting you personally at our coming functions.

T.O.S.A SECRETARY HOSPITALISED

We are sorry to report that Ernie Vale has been admitted to Lewisham Hospital, as some of us knew Ernie suffered a couple of gall attacks prior to the convention and rather than let the side down he put off going to hospital till it was all over. I am pleased to be able to report that he was operated on on Friday 18th and is now recovering. We hope that all goes well and you will soon be home again Ernie.

FOR SALE:- Conn 650 Three Manual Theatre Organ.

Anybody who is well versed in the range of theatre organs will attest to the versatility of this instrument. Three sixty one note manuals, a thirty two note concave and radiating pedal board and two expression pedals separately controlling the reed - string channel and the flute channel enable music from the classics to popular songs to be played equally well on this organ.

A custom - built Leslie speaker and two solo channel speaker boxes extend the scope of this installation.

The price for the entire installation is \$7,800.

For inspection of the entire installation contact C.Pavey on Newcastle (049)24605 after hours or (049)611146 during business hours.

KEEP WATCHING THESE PAGES FOR DETAILS OF THE VISIT BY A TOPLINE OVER-SEAS ORGANIST LATER THIS YEAR.

REVIEWS.CLUB NIGHT, TUESDAY 18th MARCH, 1980.

Our first club night this year saw a gathering of no less than 58 members, a very fine effort seeing that this was a very thirsty week for petrol. We regretfully had to give the Silent Film a miss. Owing to the scarcity of fuel our Committee member Cliff Bingham was unable to get from Hornsby Heights to Marrickville for a run through with the film. But don't despair, we hope to present this film at a future Club Night later in the year.

The evening commenced with a short Quarterly Meeting presided over by our President Alan Misdale, and members were informed of the major overhaul that had taken place to our Wurlitzer in the main chamber during December - January - February, when the organ was 'closed'.

Different aspects of the Notable Ninth Convention being held in Sydney were discussed and questions were called for. The meeting was concluded and our library of various books on organs and theatres etc. were then put on display for all to peruse and borrow if they wished. Names of members wishing to have a play on the Wurlitzer were then taken.

I do remember doing some fast talking during the night to convince the terrified ones to 'be in it', and I'm certain that they won't be so hard to get next time. Although, eleven members overcame their shyness and braved it, with some very pleasant results as the ready applause showed. A word of advice though, unless you are a very competent and experienced organist, continual use of the Post Horn as a 'melody line' voice or continual chord use can be very devastating, particularly for the listeners! Our Ladies Committee provided Tea & Coffee with bikkies for supper and I think a relaxing evening was had by all. Our thanks once again to the Ladies Committee, who always seem to be at the right place at the right time. Thanks also to Committee member Jack Lawson for bringing our library for viewing.

Our next club night will be held on Tuesday May 20th at 7.30P.M. at Marrickville Town Hall, and on that night our member David Parson will be present and give us a small talk on the organ and answer your Questions on the different aspects we all need to know about playing etc.

Thanks for coming, see you at the next one...

Doug Smith (Hon. Vice President)

On the 29th March several members and friends attended a home party hosted by our good friends Arthur & Dorothy Cammell at their home at Peakhurst. They have a Thomas Celebrity organ & we were privileged to have 18 year old Ray Turner as our organist for the night.

Ray has recently been awarded first place in the City of Sydney Eisteddford for classical & second place in the light popular section and these compliment many successes from previous years.

The programme he selected for us was both varied and enjoyable & revealed his obvious talent in this field. Ray also introduced one of his pupils Miss Debbie Jones, who played two guest spots for us.

Dorothy kindly agreed to sing for us and this was a fitting finale to the entertainment and a lead up to the sumptuous supper which was to follow. A very big thank you to Arthur and Dorothy for once again having T.O.S.A. as guests in their home and also to Ray & Debbie for generously donating their services, allowing the total of \$73.50. to be applied to the T.O.S.A. preservation fund.

Ron Smith.

Hello again, after a few months' absence from these pages. As many of you may by now have heard, Narelle and I are both so busy that we needed to recruit an addition to the family, Fern Alice Elizabeth, who weighed in at 9lb 6½ oz on 28th December last. some have referred to her as a new Vox Humana; at times Cor de Nuit might be more appropriate!

Some of my readers in Melbourne and Adelaide may shortly have the chance to meet a very distinguished visitor, for in April and May John Howlett will be visiting relatives in those cities. His career as a British theatre organist began back in the 1920's with silent films, and he played in many of our most prestigious theatres, including those equipped with the famous 4/22 Conachers (I have in my collection a piece of sheet music bearing a picture of him at the Regal, Hull, Conacher). He reached the peak of his career in 1947, when he was appointed to the "plum" theatre job in Britain, as resident organist at the Odeon, Leicester Square, where he remained for 11 years until Rank cut their organists to one, Gerald Shaw, who became the final resident there. John has played for Royal Film Performances and the many charity premieres and gala shows held at the Odeon, has broadcast since the early days, being especially renowned for his "Moonlight Lullaby" series of late-night broadcasts from the Leicester Square in the 1950's, and in the past month has appeared on both TV and radio. I spoke to him on the phone a few days ago, and he told me how much he was hoping to see some theatre and concert organs while in Australia. I don't think he quite believed me when I told him just how good your installations are, so I'm looking to you to prove me right! I shouldn't be suprised if he tried to sneak one of your organs into his baggage when he returns home!

A couple of 'discoveries' have been made here in recent months. The first was about a year ago, when a friend of mine was driving past the old Savoy, Hayes, which is now used for other purposes, and saw what looked like organ parts on the roof (what he was doing looking at the roof, when his eyes should have been on the road, is another matter!). We all knew there had been an organ there, an 8 rank Christie with a Compton console, installed just before the war, but all our records showed that it had been removed in the 1960's, and the chambers were not touched. The owners now needed more space, so the chambers had been cleared of pipes and themetal parts by a scrap dealer, and the wooden parts were headed for a bonfire a couple of days later. these he managed to rescue. If only he'd known in time he could have had the pipes as well, all for the cost of taking them away....

More recently, an old 'straight' tracker organ was unearthed, apparently complete, in a bingo hall which used to be the Coliseum, Harringay. It is a 2-manual instrument with 17 stops, built in the 1910's and last played over 50 years ago. No news yet as to what is to be done with it. I am indebted to the COS Newsletter for this snippet.

Another organ removed last year was the Rutt at the Super, Oxford. Many of us knew this instrument was there, and I saw it a couple of times and photographed it. It was installed in 1928, but last played in 1932 (it still had a d.c. blower!). The console was covered by a stage extension and was somewhat the worse for wear, but the chamber contents were mint, under a carpet of dust. Only a couple of traps were missing. It would have gone years ago, but there were almost insuperable problems in tracing who actually owned it, for it was originally installed as a private venture by a group of local businessmen, who leased it to the theatre operators. Thus it remained over the years, fortunately with the chambers safely locked. It is now in store, and will be installed in a residence in due course.

Mac's spot con't

Maybe further 'digs' in other old cinemas will produce a few more forgotten instruments....

Better news is that the 3/6 Compton of the Odoen, Weston-super-Mare is being restored and is expected to be in top shape by the summer.

Now that the Northern Hemisphere (for those who believe the world is Spherical) or Top Half (for those who believe it is flat) or Centre Portion (for those who believe it is flat, but circular) is approaching summer, many Australians may be heading this way, not only to Britian, but to other places as well. Here is your chance to do some exploring, for as a supplement to this month's 'Spot' is a list of all the theatre organ installations outside Australasia, the Americas, and the UK of which I have any trace. I know it's very incomplete, but it's the best list I have. I should welcome any further information, corrections or additions, so if you can send them to me at 10 Woodlands Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, England, RH13 7HZ, from time to time I'll include amendments in the 'Spot', so we can all share this Knowledge.

That's all from me this time, so I leave you now to peruse this list of weird and wonderful organs in weird and wonderful places.

Ian. R. McIver.

Editors note.

The list that Ian talks of above consists of 11 foolscap pages showing locations and makes of organs all over the world, and because of its size I will include it in this and later News sheets as I'm sure it will be of interest to members.

<u>Town/City</u>	<u>Theatre</u>	<u>Make</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Installed</u>	<u>Now</u>
<u>AUSTRIA</u>					
Vienna	Apollo	Christie	2/7	1928/9	?
"	La Scala	Kilgen	3/10	?	?
"	Palast Kino	Oskalyd	??	?	?
<u>BELGIUM</u>					
Antwerp	Roxy/Empire	Standaard	3/11	?	scrap
Brussels	Plaza/Churchill	Wurlitzer	2/4	1921	scrap
	This was the first Wurlitzer in europe.				
Liege	Marivaux	Wurlitzer	2/8	?	?
"	Palace	" "	2/8	?	?
<u>CHANNEL ISLANDS</u>					
Jersey (St Helier)	Forum	Compton	3/6	1935	still there
Guernsey (St Peter port)	Odeon	Compton	3/8	1937	still there
<u>CHINA</u>					
Rumoured to have had one or two theatre organs					
<u>CZECHOSLOVAKIA</u>					
Bratislava	Metropol	Christie	?	1929	?
Prague	Berenek	Rieger	3/10	?	?
"	D49 Theatre	"	3/?	1939	?
"	Unitania	?	2/?	?	still there 1950

8...

<u>Town/City</u>	<u>Theatre</u>	<u>make</u>	<u>size</u>	<u>installed</u>	<u>now</u>
<u>DENMARK</u>					
Copenhagen	Palladium	Wurlitzer	3/7	1938	scrap 1950
			Was opened by	barrie brettner	
Copenhagen	Palasttheatre	Oskalyd	2/?	?	?
<u>EGYPT</u>					
Cairo	Rivoli	Compton	4/10	1948	scrap after riot
	illuminated console	Opened by Gerald Shaw			damage in 1950
<u>EIRE/IRELAND</u>					
Cork	Savoy	Compton	3/12	1932	?removed
		Opened by Frederick Bridgman			
Dublin	Bohemian	?	??	1920	?
	Tub-pneu action; divided.	Opened by Leslie James			
Dublin	Savoy	Compton	3/12(13r)	1929	Parts 1969
		Opened by Quentin MacLean			
Dublin	Theatre Royal	Compton	4/15(16)	1935	Parts 1962
	Melotone, illuminated console, solo chello grand piano.	Op H. Alban Chambers			
Limerick	Savoy	Compton	3/7	1935	still there
	illuminated console	Opened by H.Alban Chambers.			
<u>FRANCE</u>					
Paris	Cine-Olympia	Cavaille-Coll	2/11	1930	? gone
		Opened by Tommy Desserre			
Paris	Gaumont Palace	Christie	4/14(15)	1930	in store
		Opened by Philip Dore			
Paris	Madeleine	Wurlitzer	2/5	1926	to Stanford
	hall Loughborough,UK 1937	player mechanism Op. Viola Mayer			
Paris	Paramount	Wurlitzer	2/10	1927	Offered free
	to any taker, 1960's believed to be scrapped	Op by Reginald Foort.			
Paris	Theatre des Champs-Elysees	?	??	?(1911)	?
<u>GERMANY</u> Note by town: E= now German Democratic Republic (East Germany) W= now German Federal republic (West Germany) ?= Not known					
W.Aachen	Capitol	Welte	?	?	?
W.Aachen	Grenzland-KINO	Welte	?	?	?
W.Barmen	Odin Lichtspiele	Welte	?	?	?
W.Barmen	UFA Palast	Oskalyd	1/?	?	?
?Berlin	Alhambra	Wurlitzer	2/6	1928	To dominion
		Hounslow.U.K. 1931		Style 165 Sp.	
W.Berlin(Kurfursten Damm)	Alhambra	Oskalyd	2/?	?	?
W.Berlin(Seestrasse)	Alhambra	Oskalyd	?	?	?
?Berlin	Babylon Lichtspiele	Phillips	?	?	?
?Berlin	Bavaria	Christie	2/?	1929	?
W.Berlin(Charlott- enburg)	Beba Palast Atrium	Oskalyd	2/?	1927	?
W.Berlin(charlott- enburg)	Capitol/Phobus	Oskalyd	2/?	1926(?)	?
?Berlin	Clou Konzert Haus	Christie	3/10	1929	believed
	to go to Palatial, Burwood,NSW, Australia			1930	
?Berlin	Elsyum Lichtspiele	Steinmeyer	2/24	1926	?
As there are still over 4 pages on Germany alone I will continue this at a later date Ed					

In February Issue a preamble to an interview with the legendary Sidney Torch appeared, This interview was granted to the managing director of Doric Recording Co, on a subject of which he had hardly spoken in the last 30 years. This interview will appear of three issues. It is reproduced from 'Theatre Organ' magazine of December 1972 and will be found to be in a question and answer format with the letters 'K' & 'T' to denote the speakers name.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW SIDNEY TORCH

(K) You started playing professionally at 14?

(T) I got myself a job when I was 14 by attending an audition for orchestras in a very large complex of London trappies (restaurants) run by the well known firm (Lyons, you know) and in those days we used to have what they called corner houses. They must have built lots of restaurants; 3,4,5 floors of restaurants, always on the corner and they were called corner houses. Of course, we used to have non-stop music for nine hours a day on every floor. Therefore, we used to have three bands on every floor and if there were four floors, they employed twelve orchestras. Each orchestra was about twelve or fifteen strong. It was a pretty large employment of musicians. Mind you, the pay was very, very poor in those days. I gave an audition as a pianist in one of these things. I had a black jacket, striped trousers, a bowler hat and an umbrella. I was 14 I thought myself quite a guy because I looked older. There were about 300 musicians applying for jobs and the audition piece was Tschaikowsky's 1812. I played rather well as a child, so I rattled off everybody's cues. I played the violin part, the bassoon part, and the tuba part, all on piano. I wasn't popular but I got the job. That's how I started. I was one week out of school and I got five pounds a week. In those days that was a lot of money.

(K) Did they have any sort of a musicians union at that time ?

(T) Not as effective as they are today. Today, of course, it's 100% closed shop as it is in the States. In other words, if you're not a member you don't play. But in those days there were two unions. There was one which was called the Normal Average Player and there was another called the Association which was only intended for the better players, the top players who commanded all the best work. If you belonged to the Normal Union, the musicians union, you were less of a performer. It was a sort of snob value of course. If you were a member of the Association you could get five shillings extra, you know, this sort of thing. But of course, that's done away with now, there's no such thing. Everybody belongs to the same union. I did all sorts of things. I went on tour with a musical comedy to play the piano and this is where I first got my appetite for conducting. One evening the manager of the company came to me and said that Jack (that was the conductor) is sick, you're conducting to-night, and vanished, you know, like that ! That's how I became a conductor. I don't remember much about it. I just remember going there and the entire orchestra saying to me, go on, you can do it. I was about 16. But I just had to do it. Everything was red. I remember there was a red stage with red people on it and the red music in front of it and a red orchestra to the left and right of it. Sounds like the charge of the Light Brigade, doesn't it. But we must have all finished together. To this day I couldn't tell you what happened I was unconscious then, I still am. But that's how I became a conductor.

(K) A conductor has special frustrations. When you get a large orchestra and everybody's not doing their bit because maybe they're not feeling up to it, you suffer accordingly. Right ?

Torch interview cont.

(T) Part of your job is to make them do their bit. Of course, you can't always get the same degree of good performance. To get a good performance not only must you be feeling well and up to performing yourself, but every individual member of the orchestra must be feeling fit as well. Then you may get a good performance. But if there are 100 people in the orchestra, the chances are against you getting this thing. But it does happen and you operate that anything over 50% is good. If you go below 50%, this is when you've got a dud in front of you. And of course, we are all human, we can all make mistakes, and sometimes if you're feeling exceptionally well and on top of the performance you become rash. This is when you do make mistakes. After I had this taste of conducting, I had an offer to play the piano in the cinemas in the days of silent films. It was a very large orchestra in the largest cinema in London, what we call over here a super cinema, the first in London. Most of the people who played in this orchestra in those days, if they are still alive, are stars in their own right. We've all got a feeling toward stars. We had one of the first Wurlitzer organs in England or in Britain in that cinema.

(W) (Judd Walton) What cinema was that?

(T) A cinema named the Broad was in a suburb of London called Stratford, in East London. It had something like about 3,000 seats in the days when most cinemas were 400 or 500 seats. The first one of the very, very large cinemas. Anyway, we had an American organist named Archie Parkhouse, who was a demonstrator for the Wurlitzer Organ Company and had been sent over by Wurlitzer to England for the installation of this organ and to demonstrate how it should be played and to teach English people how to play it. He said to me "Why don't you learn to play the cinema organs." So I said, "Well I don't know how." He said, "Well you ought to because I've seen talkies come in the states and I'm sure they are coming over here and you'll be out of a job." I said, "Well I don't want to be out of a job. How do you do it?" He said "Sit down here, put your hands on there and I'll be back in 10 minutes, I'm going for a smoke." The film was running and there I was stuck with an organ which I didn't know how to play. Sure the orchestra did get the sack, and I was kept on as assistant organist. I used to stay there night after night, hours and hours of practise and experiment- thats how I learned the organ. No one taught me I learned it by necessity.

In those days we used to have two organists because we used to sit there waiting for the film to break down, so that you could jump quickly and play something. You know, Wurlitzer organs or in fact any cinema organ has to have an electric motor to give the necessary power to the keyboard and the pipes. If this motor is allowed to run for an unlimited time, it burns out like any electrical motor. So you have to switch it off. Of course, in the way of the world, every time you switch it off the film broke down, Every time you left the motor run the film didn't break down, so in the end the management decided it was a waste of time having a second organist because sure enough as soon as he switched off the motor the film broke down. By the time it was running again the film had restarted. So they said to me, "You're finishing the end of the month." Archie Parkhouse, this American- very kind to me, said "Don't worry, I'll give you an introduction to some of my friends." He sent me to see them and the organist at what was then the Regal Marble Arch which is today the Odeon Marble Arch. A very famous cinema in those old days, it was so elegant that all the linkmen and reception men inside wore powdered wigs and white stockings, in the manner of footmen.

Torch interview cont',

He sent me to see the organist there, a very famous man, the late Quentin McLean. He gave me a letter of introduction to McLean. I went to the stage door and said I wanted to see McLean. The stagedoor keeper said, "You can't. He doesn't see anybody without appointment." I left the letter and when I went back, the receptionist called me over and said, "You're wanted on the phone." It was Quentin McLean who said to me, "Why didn't you wait and see me." I said "The stagedoor keeper told me to go away." He said, "I badly wanted to see you. Can you come back?" I went back and he said to me, "Look, I've got to go to Dublin to open a new cinema and I badly need someone to fill my place while I'm away. Can you do it?" I said "Yes" He said, "Come back at 11:00 tonight and I'll show you how this organ works." It was the biggest organ in England. Five manuals. Frightened the life out of me. He showed me how to play it and I stayed all night. The next day they offered me the job as Pianist and assistant organist. So I wasn't out of work again. Mind you, I don't think this is talent, I don't think it is luck. It's a combination of talent and luck but the other thing was that I was prepared to sit there all night and practice until I had mastered it.

(K) You had tremendous self discipline on that.

(T) Not only self discipline. It was my main chance. I wanted to succeed. If you want to succeed you can. That's how I became an organist.

(W) How long were you there?

(T) 1928 to 1933 or 1934 about 6 years. I was assistant to Quentin McLean then I was assistant to his successor who was Reginald Foort. When Reggie Foort left I was given the job. In those days I used to do broadcasts twice a week, three quarters of an hour each one. Twice a week, 52 weeks a year, broadcast all over the world. Today everything is recorded in advance. In those days we used to broadcast on what is now called the BBC Wurlitzer. I used to get up at 2:00 in the morning go down to the theatre, broadcast, come home again. You didn't go by your time, you went by the time of the country of reception which was eight hours behind, that was just too bad.

(W) Was it during this period you made your first cinema organ record?

(T) The first cinema organ record I made, two records, I think or three, I'm not certain were labeled Regal Zonaphone.

(W) How did this come about?

(T) Columbia used to record the orchestra of the Regal Marble Arch. I had to do an arrangement for a record and the arrangement was a selection from the music of the King of Jazz which had never been known in this country - brand new. Shows how far back that is. I was given the sheet music, the American copies of the sheet music, to make a selection. The Columbia manager, A and R man said, "That's a good arrangement. Who did that?" Somebody said "He did." So he came up to me and said, "I'm going to do things for you. You're playing the organ too, eh? Would you like to make records?" I said, "Of Course." That's how I got a record. From there I graduated to Columbia and then I graduated to Decca after that.

(W) What was your next organ post after the Regal Marble Arch from which I understand the organ is now removed, unfortunately.

(T) A very famous cinema in North London called the Regal Edmonton. They opened that and they offered me the job so I went there. Then after that I went on tours opening up new cinemas along the way. I went finally to the State Kilburn which was the biggest Wurlitzer in the country. I opened that and stayed there until the war came. Then I went into the RAF and stopped playing the organ.

Torch interview cont'.

(K) You did some fantastic records on that Regal Edmonton (Christie)

(T) You think so. I look back on them now and think they're pretty corny compared to what could have been done .

(K) You may think so, sir, but we in the States think differently. There isn't anyone in the States past or present, that has equaled the records you made on the Edmonton or the Kilburn.

(T) That sounds very nice. I wish I thought that too. I listen to them very occasionally. About once every 5 years I take one out and play it and then I blush and put them back again- quickly. They may have been advanced for those days, I don't think they are nearly as good as they should have been.

(K) They were. Well advanced. But they still stand up today.

(T) Yes but technically, I think they sort of fell between lack of ideas and too many ideas. In other words, they came halfway between that. In some instances when I look back on them I think to myself, why didn't I think of doing so and so. And then I look back and I say why did I attempt to do so and so. It was a dangerous life you know.

(K) Like the "Flying Scotsman"

(T) It was made up on the spur of the moment.

(K) That was a fantastic record.

(T) Yes, but you see, there is no tune there at all. It's just a couple of traditional Scottish tunes put together. And the whole thing is a fix.

(K) Right, but it just flows like water.

(T) Well, it's made up. It's improvisation. Every time I played it, it was different, because it simply had the tune of Loch Lomond or Annie Laurie, then I improvised on that. This was not difficult.

(W) Weren't most of these recordings your arrangements ?

(T) Oh everyone of them were my arrangements but they were not written down. They were practised until they were in my head.

(W) The only record, sir, that I have broken in my collection, and I have several thousand records, was your recording on Columbia, "Teddy Bear's Picnic". I had a very dear cat that became frightened and knocked it off the table.

(T) The cat shows remarkable taste.

(K) I have a complete collection of your records, except the Zonaphones.

(T) They are not good. These were very early days when I was experimenting. You know, the ultimate recording of a cinema organ has never been mastered to the extent of recording an orchestra. I believe that Jesse Crawford finally made records in a sound proof chamber with no sound except what he got through the can. He couldn't hear the pipes because they were outside. Is this so? I have been told this.

(K) I don't know. He did a lot of recording in North Tonawanda.

(W) No. Not the recordings.

(K) He did the player rolls in North Tonawanda.

(W) He recorded basically on five organs. The Paramount studio, the earlier style F in the Wurlitzer hall in New York, the Special style 260 in Chicago and a style E on which he made Valencia with 7 ranks.

(T) You're much more learned about cinema organs than I am. I had forgotten all this.

(W) I have one in my home 2 manual 14 ranks. Two Tibias, A Wurlitzer Musette.

(T) I wouldn't have thought, judging by your appearances, you lived as dangerously as all that. And you play it yourself?

(W) Strictly for my own amazement.

(T) Well that's the only way to do it. It's a very dangerous instrument

Torch interview cont'

because it is the easiest thing on the cinema organ to be vulgar. It's also terribly simple to be loud. The difficulty of playing the cinema organ is to restrain yourself and show good taste.

(W) Mr Torch, you have just reiterated what I've been trying to say for so many years.

(T) Well, I'm honoured that we think alike, but I am sure it's true.

(K) Crawford had this feeling.

(W) Precisely right !

(T) Have you ever played any of the British organs, Compton or Christie?

(W) Yes it has been my pleasure to have done that this visit about 24 of them.

(T) Wild horses wouldn't make me play a cinema organ and on 24! your a brave man.

(W) I have been down to Southhampton which I disliked with great intensity, it's a Compton. Yesterday I heard the State Kilburn which is as near our large American organs as I've heard even though it is only 16 ranks. I had a great night at the 8 rank out at Clapham. I loved the Gaumont in Manchester. The Odeon or former Paramount is a typical Publix No 1.

(T) I like the Odeon in Manchester. It's very good. Henry Croudson used to play that. Great little organ. Most of these including the British ones always remind me of a bison getting out of the swamp. You said what a marvelous bass it had, now this is indicative of most cinema organs. they all had a terrific rolling sound from the bottom register. There wasn't enough personality on top, registration, you know. All tended to be voiced - everything was voiced for the Tibia sound.

(W) This is right.

(T) This is why I liked playing the Regal Marble Arch. Because this was limited to legitimate organ in it's voicing. It had nothing to do with the actioner unit system. In other words, you could get staccato authority, not only in the actual key performance but the staccato of the sound. the pipe would go eep, like that.

(W) Was that your favourite organ ?

(T) No, but I think there was a lot to be said for it. It, of course had this straight side to its nature. Most organs tend to have the same sort of loud rolling noise throughout the entire arrangement of the instrument right from the 2' down to the 32' and it had this. I think although it's a necessary part of the cinema organ, it is a trap for the unwary performer. It's like having an orchestra composed of players, all of whom have a very large vibrato. Imagine all those strings vibrating together. This isn't very good. I think that the voicing over here has tended in this country to be much too sticky sentimental. At least what we care to think of as being sentimental in those days.

(K) The Regal Edmonton, on the Christie, had a lot of brilliance and snap to it.

(T) That was my voicing. In the "Bugle Call Rag", that organ goes daddle daddle dup. You try and do that on most of the Compton organs or most of the Wurlitzers in this country and it goes buooh buooh go buooh.

(W) Without tremolos, still ?

(T) Makes no difference. IT's the voicing of the stops and the location of the chambers. Youknow, in sound, I don't have to tell you in some cinemas the site of the chambers is very detrimental to the sound. you get this backwards and forwards roll. You know I haven't talked about cinema organs in 25 years.

Torch interview cont'

(K) This is why we are so thrilled because you are talking about it to us.

(T) I very rarely talk about anything to do with that side of my career. I have as my orchestral pianist a very famous organist, William Davis. He is probably the best player in this country today. We sometimes talk about it and he imitates me sometimes. We have an electric organ which we use in the orchestra and when I'm least expecting it he'll play my old signature tune. But that's the nearest I ever get to it.

(W) I heard it yesterday - Douglas Reeve at the State Kilburn Program.

(T) They don't play it like I used to. I used to do 1 or 2 glissandos. They try and do a glissando every time. We all copy Jesse Crawford who invented the glissando as far as I know.

(W) He said that he did.

(T) I believe this because I never heard it before he did it. But then like everything else in a cinema organ, it is the discretion with which you use it which is important. The trouble is this, they finally can play loud, they play loud all the time. By the time they can do glissandos they do them all the time. All these things are very valuable. These are the points that make up a cinema organ - the ability to do special tricks which only a cinema organist can do. If you use them all the time, they are no longer tricks.

(K) This is where the taste comes from. This is what you had and were very advanced when you did it.

(W) If you will permit me to say so you were so far ahead of any other artist on this instrument.

(T) I think this only proves how bad the others were. it doesn't prove that I was good.

(W) On the contrary I believe it does prove how good you were because to this day in our opinion and those of us in America who have listened, it hasn't been touched.

To be continued.

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