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TOSA NEWS

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of Australia, N.S.W. Division
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THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (N.S.W. DIVISION)

*present the ever popular and
very entertaining organist*

★ **NEIL JENSEN**

**At the console of the mighty
Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ**

"Jensen far outranks most other contemporaries in his field. It's his musicianship - the sum of many attributes which sets him apart from the rest. The bottom line, actually is CLASS - spelled out in capitols because Jensen is a capitol performer."

Bruce Laird,
1983 International Tour,
Delaware, U.S.A.

"The most impressive Australian import I have seen."

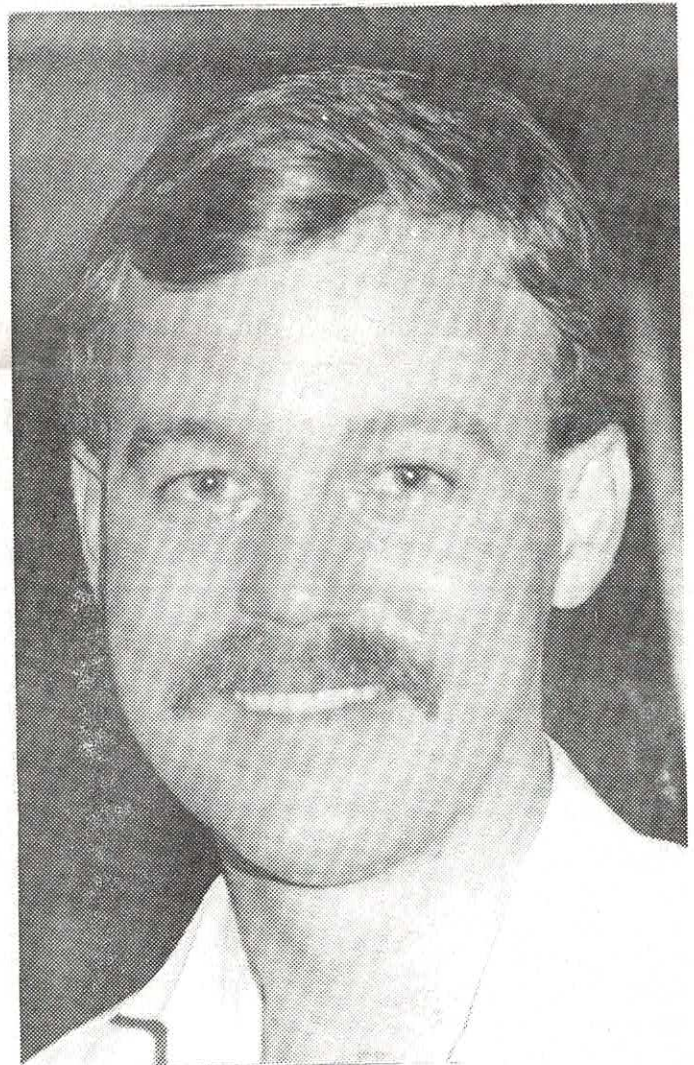
Television W.M.G.C.34,
New York, U.S.A.

"Jensen is without doubt, one of the great entertainment artists today."

The Console,
U.S.A.

"For blues feel, Jensen is in a class with Wright and Larsen. This young man has poise and style to burn."

Theatre Organ (U.S.A.)
January/February 1986



**SUNDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 1986 AT 2.00pm.
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL**

ADMISSION

**Adults \$8.00 Member of TOSA \$6.00 Concession \$5.00
(Children under 10 are admitted free)**

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THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION)

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The Secretary, TOSA (NSW Division)
Box A584 P.O. SYDNEY SOUTH. N.S.W. 2000

NEW MEMBERS

(August Meeting)

A cordial welcome is extended to the following new members.

Alan Kerry
Kay Kennedy
Amy and Roy Burdekin
Phyllis Crawford
Gordon and Ann Powell
Alan and Margaret Graham

INTERSTATE EDITORS PLEASE NOTE

Would interstate editors in future, please send News Letters direct to the Editor, 120 Dennis Street, Lakemba, N.S.W. 2195.

APPEAL TO MEMBERS

It would be particularly helpful to me to have a small team of responsible members to act as ushers and generally be available to assist as required in the tasks of seeing that our patrons are all properly seated at the Society's concerts.

Therefore, I would be grateful if those persons who would be prepared to help us in this way, would kindly phone me on 747 1240 so that I can prepare a list and be able to call on these good folk as the need may arise.

Thanks in anticipation of your co-operation

Frank Rohanek
(Concert floor manager)

DATES FOR
YOUR DIARY



SEPTEMBER

MONDAY 1st at 7.30pm.
COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY 10th at 7.30pm.
MEMBERS QUARTERLY MEETING
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL

Members quarterly meeting in accordance with the constitution, which requires the holding of three General Meetings of members each year. Provided the time taken by the meeting allows for it, there will be some organ music to follow, as well as tea and coffee.

TUESDAY 23rd at 5.00pm.
NOMINATIONS CLOSE

SUNDAY 28th at 2.00pm.
NEIL JENSEN IN CONCERT
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL
Admission:- Adults \$8.00 Member of
TOSA \$6.00 Concession \$ 5.00
Booking form in this issue.

MONDAY 29th at 7.30pm.
COMMITTEE MEETING

PLEASE NOTE:

The Fete that was to be held on Saturday 20th, HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 17th at 7.30pm.
CAPITOL ORGAN FUND FAISING NIGHT
Bondi-Waverly RSL Club, Gray Street,
Bondi Junction.

Patron Ian Davies is once again inviting members to attend a great night of organ and piano music.

Guest artists will be Valda Lang, Patricia Wooldridge and Neil Palmer.

Admission:- \$4.00. The Bistro Bar is open from 5.30pm.

SUNDAY 26th at 2.00pm.
FREE CONCERT

Featured artist will be the ever popular BILL SCHUMACHER.

NOVEMBER

MONDAY 3rd at 7.30pm.
COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY 4th at 7.30pm.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL

SUNDAY 23rd at 12.30pm.
CHRISTMAS PARTY

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

Tuesday 12th August 1986 - a moderate, not too cold winters night that saw some 70 people attend yet another special meeting at Marrickville Town Hall. However, this meeting may, we hope, go down in TOSA history as a meeting with a difference.

After some opening remarks from Acting President Frank Ellis, nominations were called for the positions left vacant by the spate of recent resignations. The positions of Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Minute Secretary were filled by Ian Somerville, Bob McMinn, Pam McMinn and Robert Gliddon without any ballot being held, that is those nominees were elected unopposed. A ballot was required for the three committee positions and that ballot saw the return to committee of the loyal and hard working Wilson's (Ron and Phyl) and the election of the very popular organist, Margaret Hall to committee for the first time.

On the inside front cover of this issue of TOSA NEWS you can now see that we have a full compliment of office bearers with, I feel, a good mixture of experience, youth and enthusiasm. My fellow committee members will, I am sure, join me when I say NOW IS THE TIME to put our shoulder to the wheel, tear down the barricades that have divided the membership over recent months and get on with the running of OUR TOSA.

We have many tasks ahead of us in the near future and to these tasks, your committee have already started to address themselves. We have interesting upcoming concerts with local, interstate and overseas artists to entertain you.

We will be making and implementing many decisions about Marrickville and Campsie installations and through this page of TOSA NEWS, on a regular basis, it is our desire to bring to you the members, the results of and the reasons behind those decisions. It is our intention to make this page of TOSA NEWS part of our reports to you. As I said earlier herein;

NOW IS THE TIME - LET US, TOSA NSW, MOVE AHEAD.

FROM YOUR PATRON

PHANTOM OF THE WURLITZER



Going back in time to the early 1930's, our story of the Supernatural took place in the State Theatre, Melbourne.

In those early days, the organist of the State was an American by the name of Frank Lanterman, and his deputy was one Arnold Colman, whom I later studied theatre organ with.

Apparently Frank Lanterman was in the habit of staying behind late at night after the show to practice for the following day. Now Arnold Colman was aware of this, and decided to play a practical joke on poor old Frank.

At the time of night this took place, the theatre was in darkness except for a few cleaners lights, creating a very ghostly atmosphere.

Melbourne's State Theatre at the time was the only Super Cinema that had a 4/21 Wurlitzer fitted with dual Waterfall Consoles, one in the main left hand pit on a turntable, and the other was stationary on the right hand side of the proscenium. This meant that two organists could play duets on the one organ, which was very effective indeed.

One night during Frank's practice routine, Arnold sneaked in and hid on the dual console setting up stops to correspond with the master console. Consequently, every time Frank finished playing a piece of music, the organ would suddenly start to play the last few bars of its own accord.

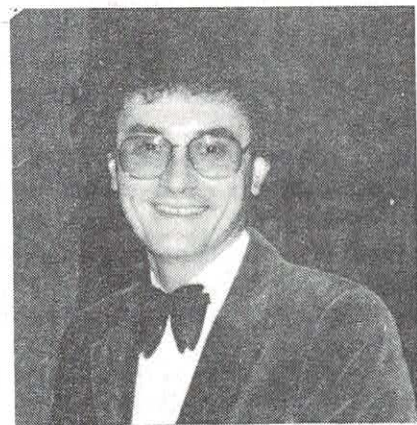
This happened three or four times, and eventually Frank degenerated into a complete nervous wreck and decided it was time to clear right out of the theatre before the ghostly apparition really got to him.

I know he got thrown out of a couple of pubs the next day for jibbering. Arnold of course, told him the next day what had happened, and Frank was somewhat relieved, (wouldn't you?), but not long afterwards, Frank returned to America, and Arnold Colman took over as resident organist, where he remained for many years. He also became famous for his regular Sunday night broadcasts over the ABC, called the "Epilogue".

Did someone say "Truth is Stranger than Fiction"? You know what?. I think they're right, and Frank Lanterman admitted that he was never quite sure whether or not he had contacted the Spirit World and actually heard the Phantom of the Wurlitzer.

More later
Ian Davies - Patron.

JOHN ATWELL IN CONCERT



SUNDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 1986 at 2.30pm.

EPPING BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr. of Ray & Carlingford Roads, Epping.

John Atwell plays the Christie Unit Organ in a program which comprises a wide range of music from classical through theatre organ favorites to pops.

Come and join us for an entertaining afternoon of your kind of music. All donations will assist in the continuing maintenance and up-grading of the organ.

IAN DAVIES CONCERT.

Sunday, 27th July, 1986.

by John Giacchi.

Sunday, 27th July saw the ever popular theatre organ personality and our Patron, Ian Davies at the Wurlitzer console at Marrickville Town Hall. "Popular?" you may ask, "Just how sure are you about that?" Well, before the concert started, more seats had to be brought in, and that testifies to Ian's popularity.

For those more recent members of the Society, Ian has been the Patron for many years. At the final recital of the Capitol Theatre Wurlitzer in 1972, he was the last person to "take 'er down" playing "Cruising Down the River" - his signature tune. Although I was only 3 years of age at the time, I have heard a recording of this recital and nostalgic it was indeed!!!

Anyway, back to 1986. Ian opened up the show with his signature tune and "Yeoman of England". Following this were "Poinciana", "Happy Whistler", "The Harry Lime Theme", "Look What They've Done to My Song Ma", a negro spiritual medley consisting of "Deep River", "Everytime I Feel the Spirit", and "Living Low" followed by a waltz bracket which included "Love is a Beautiful Song", "Tennessee Waltz", "Merry Widow Waltz", "My Hero" and "Chocolate Soldier Waltz".

"The Touch of Your Lips" and "Love is the Sweetest Thing" were very nicely played. One of my favourite hymns called "All Glory Be to God on High" brought out the powerful aspects of the Wurlitzer. A George Wright arrangement of "Quiet Village" was followed by "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" and that ended the first half.

Whew! and that was only the first half!

A big thank you must go to Phyllis Wilson and the ladies for organising afternoon tea for a crowded Town Hall.

A raffle, drawn by Jade Tomlin was won by Mrs. Bleech and Mrs. Lucas.

Also a thank-you to Jade for selling the raffle tickets in which all tickets were sold.

Many thanks must also go to Betty Weismantel for donating the beautiful hand painted plate, and to the person (name unknown), who donated the clock.

The result of this generous effort was \$149.45.

Ian then commenced the second half at the console with selections from "Paint Your Wagon" followed by "March of the Toys", "Telstar", "Canadian Sunset", "Under Paris Skies", "The Very Thought of You", "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" and an up tempo Latin American bracket.

Fats Waller made his presence felt as Ian played "Honeysuckle Rose", "Ain't Misbehavin'", "You're Nobody's Sweetheart Now" and "Margie", followed by "Patience and Prudence".

Ian finished the concert with "I Still Call Australia Home" and was called back to loud applause to play "Cruising Down the River" which had everyone singing this beautiful piece.

Whatever you do, don't miss out on Ian Davies' invitation to the Capitol Organ Fund Raising Night on Friday 17th October at 7.30 p.m. Not only will you be treated and entertained with quality music but you will also be helping the Society with our Capitol Organ Restoration Fund! Don't miss it!!!!



A jubilant Ian Davies and wife Mary.

MARGARET HALL

Makes a Return Visit to New Zealand.

While residing in New Zealand for almost three years, Margaret became involved in the restoration and re-installation of the 2-manual, now 13-rank Wurlitzer in the Hollywood Theatre, Avondale, Auckland. This organ was originally the 2-manual 8-rank Wurlitzer (Opus 1475) from Auckland's Regent Theatre.

John Parker, a professional organ builder, headed the restoration team, with Margaret acting as consultant for the revised tonal scheme of the instrument. Margaret was also responsible for wiring the unenclosed xylophone and all the internal console wiring.

While the organ was still uncompleted with only a few basic ranks working, Margaret performed two concerts in order to raise funds for continued restoration progress. At the opening concert of the Hollywood Wurlitzer in November 1982, and again in July 1983, Margaret was the associate artist with Tony Fencelon, performing both solo items and piano and organ duets.

Aucklanders welcomed Margaret back in July 1986 when she played a solo concert to a capacity house of 500. Her popularity in Auckland is such that there were only fifty tickets left for door sales. Due to the success of her recent New Zealand appearance, she has been invited to return again in December as the special guest artist for the Hollywood's. Wurlitzer Christmas Spectacular.

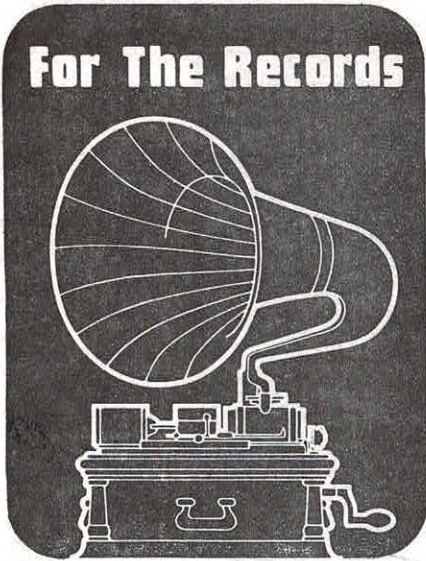
Margaret first came to the attention of T.O.S.A. (N.S.W. Division) members when she was resident organist for MECCA* Theatres from 1976 to 1980, and has performed for our Society both in concert and during Convention cameo spots on numerous occasions.

When not hopping across the Tasman, Margaret attends the N.S.W. State Conservatorium studying organ with Robert Ampt. She is currently in her third year of a Bachelor of Music Degree.

Photo below:-
Margaret Hall seated at the Wurlitzer console at the Hollywood Theatre, Avondale, Auckland.



For The Records



RED HOT AND BLUE. George Wright debuting his 4/32 orchestral studio organ. Digital stereo recording. Available at the Record Shop at Marrickville Concerts, for \$16.00 - the pre-devaluation price.

This disc is indeed a milestone; it's the long anticipated debut of Wright's second studio organ. Many readers will recall George's previous instrument in the Don Leslie (yes, the twirling speaker man) studio in South Pasadena, California. It was destroyed by fire some years ago.

Wright has made numerous recordings on a variety of good instruments in the years since the fire, but in the back of his mind was a desire to own an instrument, one on which he could carry out, for example, tonal developments and experiments which would be in harmony with his perfectionist mindset. One example would be the use of whole ranks of pipes which do nothing but "mutate" such as his Tibia Tierce, 73 pipes which are heard only at 3-1/5-foot pitch. Why not borrow that mutation from one of the three other Tibias (not to mention an independent Pedal Tibia)? There are ample borrowed Tibia mutations available but George's ear can pick up the beats on the borrowed mutation (they are not quite "in tune" with the basic pitches) and he feels that the "tuned-in" Tibia Tierce makes good use of the pipework. While on the subject of pedal voices, can you imagine an independent 8' Pedal Kinura? George does!

The organ has all the expected goodies such as Brass Trumpet, Posthorn, Musette, Brass Saxophone, Krumet, two Voxes

and a pedal Cor Anglais. Among the more exotic voices are that long-time Wright favourite, a Style D Trumpet, and Quintadena, Lieblich Flute, a Skinner pedal Wood Violone, a 9-foot Steinway Grand Piano, a 49-pipe Calliope, and - are you ready for this - tuned Songbirds (22 of them)!

And that's only a sampling. Of the 32 ranks, 21 are Wurlitzer. The rest are various makes which come up to George's standards. He started with five basic Wurlitzer ranks from the Los Angeles Westlake Theatre plus the Main Chamber voices from the Omaha Elks' Temple Wurlitzer. From there "Like Topsy, it 'grewed'". says George, as friends donated various priceless parts over the years. Listing the lineage of only the ranks, for example, would expand this review into a novel.

About five years ago it was decided that enough parts had accumulated to start construction. Assisted by Ken Kukuk, George has been at it ever since. So has Ken. He was fortunate in locating a site with a music room designed by a musician; it has no parallel walls, thus reducing the chance of "standing waves" distortion.

Then there's the custom electronic action designed by Bob Trousdale which replaces the original mechanical switches. This makes possible many additional subtleties. And then there is the noise-free digital recording. So many goodies!

Readers will no doubt wonder whether the results justify the time consuming perfectionism and extended construction time. Our jaded ears generate a loud "yes". To us, both organ and the musical programme offered add up to one of George Wright's finest efforts. Let's examine the music.

Side one opens appropriately, with a medley from the title show, including a peppy "Delovely", a slightly Crawford-style intro to a beguined "Ours", a spirited "Ridin' High" with enough gags and sound effects to please the late Ethel Merman who played in the Broadway show. A sexy "Down in the Depths" in beguine rhythm completes the set. Many tempo, style and registration changes here. The opening selection is reprised.



George Wright at his new orchestral organ.

In one of the James Bond 007 movies was a tune called "Nobody Does it Better", probably played against a visual panorama of feminine pulchritude with the accent on skin. It's played here in slow ballad tempo with a sensuous sway and we meet that gorgeous nine-foot Steinway grand.

Next, a dirty, lowdown "St. Louis Blues". George probably decided to offer an arrangement to end all further experimentation. He makes both broad and detailed references to a Gershwin piano prelude (with a brief allusion as to what they do in the southern part of France), a modulation lifted from "Rhapsody in Blue" which leads into the "Habanera" from Bizet's "Carmen" with interjections of the "St. Louis Blues" breaking through. Then a swingband version which one might associate with styles reminiscent of Count Basie and Billy Strayhorn's arrangements for Duke Ellington, with instrumental riffs and ensemble work to quicken the pulse of any jazz or swing enthusiast. The "St. Louis Blues" presented here is easily the best work of three Georges.

At least once, on recent recordings, George allows himself a few silly moments. One recent lapse was "Let's All Sing Like the Birdies Sing" with its plethora of affronts to the styles which made the name George Wright a household word in many organ-minded households. This time George has unleashed his searing sense of humour on an even lesser title - "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini". George strips

the wearer bare of all cover and dignity (if any) with his organ effects - siren, tom-tom, calliope, out-of-tune-sounding registration and, worst of all, a "talking Vox", not to mention that rank of 22 tuned canaries! Gad!

But we'll admit it requires an unusual skill to make even a Vox "talk" and it's all in fun anyway. Those points plus what George does with the final selection balances.

"El Condor Pasa" is an old French melody which was brought to prominence in this country by Simon and Garfunkel. George plays it in the aura of mystery the offbeat melody suggests on both theatrical and straight combinations, the latter as a majestic fugue. There are hints of Crawford-style Tibia embellishment early in this cut. In all, it's somber music.

"The Rock and Roll Waltz" hit high spots in the 1955 charts due chiefly to a Kay Starr recording. But George's treatment is his own, which he describes as "trashy, vulgar and full of fun". He lets his imagination in the registration field run wild, with sequences on Tibia mutations (remember that Tibia Tierce!) with and without tremos, plus the pizzicato coupler. Get those chromatic downward "sneers"!

George has always admired the distinctive compositions of his friend David Rose and has long desired to record Rose's "Holiday for Strings". It's a pre-World War II tune so why delay?

Simply because George now has the organ he feels can do the complex composition full justice. Whatever his reservations, this one was worth waiting for. The rhythmic vigor is all there and the smooth middle part is played on the most gorgeous set of Tibias on records.

For his closer George allows his imagination to soar. How the Doris Day hit "Secret Love", ever became enmeshed with the most heart-rending theme from Wagner's romantic opera "Tristan und Isolde", remains George Wright's secret - but the themes, as arranged by George, complement one another beautifully. We heard that one of the technicians who worked on the recording was moved to tears on hearing it. We can believe it; so was this reviewer! That bit of "Liebestod" (Love Death) elevates an old pop to new levels of emotional value. It's a closer which may leave some psyches temporarily frazzled, but its also a very appropriate closer - because it will be remembered.

No artificial reverb has been added; George feels that the wood and plaster construction of the music room is "live" enough. Hearing the grooved result would bear him out. There is plenty of acoustical brightness here.

It's interesting to note the ways in which the perfectionist in George Wright manifests itself; when he had finished recording and with test pressings ready, George decided that he could do it better (with different microphone placement, for example), so he junked the first take and recorded the whole programme over again, a task made simpler through the digital process. So, purchasers will buy the second take. No, there is no multiple track recording in the old sense.

On the subject of recording, for those who prefer a laser beam to a stylus, and are equipped to play compact discs, a "CD" expanded to circa 59 minutes will soon be available. George claims that hearing the CD is a "totally different experience".

But back to the digital present. Three writers, including George, prepared the jacket notes. Organist Dan Bellomy

offers a few pertinent paragraphs about George. Notes about the organ, and its genealogy, are done by Wright and a retired journalist, Kathryn Manners, wrote the notes about the music. We have reservations about Miss Manners' work, probably because of the rather uncomfortable notes she wrote for the initial Wright recording made on the Oakland Paramount Wurlitzer wherein she seemed to be looking down her nose at George, the theatre organ and its music. Well, cheer up - this time she comes through with well-written notes about the music, so we can assume that some wise soul put her wise to the values of a positive outlook.

The album-style jacket is reflective of the current concern with patriotic sentiment in its flag-coloured design and artwork. The review pressing was as flawless as the Banda label guarantees. **It's a first class package!**

- - - reprinted from "Theatre Organ",

January/February 1985 Edition.

FOR THOSE TRAVELLING SOUTH

VICTORIA

On Sunday 21st of September at 2 pm. talented South Australian artists Malcolm and Heather Ross, organist and soprano, in concert at the Village Theatre Reservoir.

Admission:- Adults \$8, Pensioners/students \$5, under 15 free.

TOSA members \$7, concession \$4.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Sunday September 7th at 2 pm.

Sydney organist Margaret Hall in concert at the Capri theatre.

Admission:- Adults \$7, Members \$6, Concession \$5. Children 15 and under admitted free.

TOSA CHRISTMAS PARTY

All details of the Christmas Party to be held at Marrickville Town Hall on Sunday 23rd of November at 12.30pm. will appear in the next issue of TOSA NEWS.

THE CANBERRA COMPTON OPENING

(By Robert Gliddon)

Sunday, 17th August dawned cold and overcast in Canberra and the day really didn't warm up too much by the early afternoon. People came from all over the Nation's Capitol and surrounds to attend this recital. Two bus loads plus one mini-bus load had left Mortdale Station at 8a.m. and special thanks must go to Ritchie Willis for arranging this as it enabled many more Sydney Members of T.O.S.A. to attend this important function. Many Sydneysiders were pleased to see our long time member and Society Archivist, Ian Cameron who is now resident in the Goulburn area and doesn't attend as many functions in Sydney now as he would like. Others came from Sydney by private car, some for the day, others had decided "to make a week-end of it". It would be hard to know exactly how many attended from T.O.S.A. (N.S.W.) but a fair estimate would be in the region of 120 - 130, a fine attendance by our Division!

By 2 p.m. the last of the audience was being seated in the Albert Hall and it must be said that the A.C.T. Division are extremely fortunate to have such a a delightful location for their Compton organ. The hall is one of the older structures in Canberra, dating back nearly to the establishment of the city. In some ways the Albert Hall is reminiscent of Marrickville Town Hall though considerably more intimate and certainly in much better state of repair, and the level of furnishings make it much more comfortable as a concert location. It must be mention that parking is not a problem (even with a capacity audience) as there is a paved car-park opposite the hall and ample space in the park behind for the overflow.

Clinton White acted as master of ceremonies to introduce T.O.S.A. (A.C.T) President Ian Harrison who gave us a few short words on the project before introducing the member in the Federal Parliament for the A.C.T., Mrs Ros Kelly. The effervescent Mrs Kelly said how pleased she was for the addition to the cultural life of Canberra that the organ would make and declared the organ open by playing a few notes on the accompaniment manual.

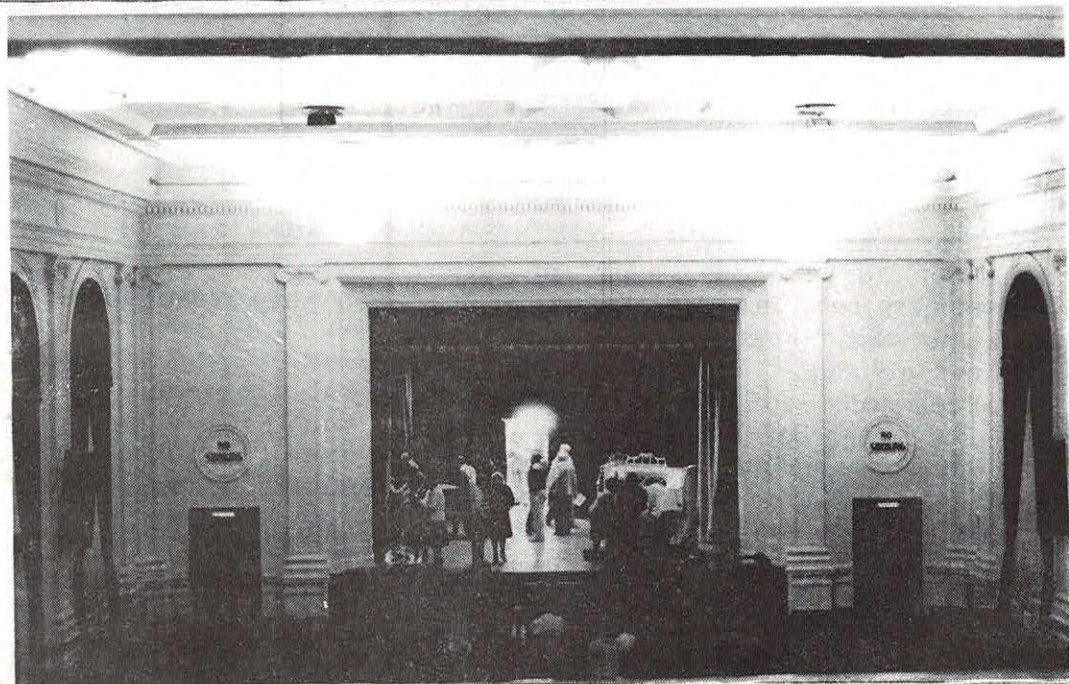
Obviously interested in organ music, Mrs Kelly stayed for the entire performance - it's good to know the organ has a friend in high places.

Tony Fenelon was called to the console and opened with a lively "Step to the Rear", Overture to "Die Fladermaus" followed and then a long time favourite of this reviewer, Newell Chase's novelty "Midnight in Mayfair" - the excellent Compton Xylophone playing a prominent part here. "Delacado" next, followed by "Hi Lilli, Hi Lilli, HiLo" with a cute bird whistle accompaniment (who said the silent movie effects had no place in to-days' recitals?) - the well known Abba piece "I know Him So Well" featured the beautiful vibraphone stop which perhaps needs some small amount of slowing down. "Scarborough Fair" showed off the classical sounds of which the instrument is capable and tonally the Compton held together very well when "played straight". A Walt Disney selection proved a popular choice:- "It's a Small World", "When you wish Upon a Star" and concluding with the "Mickey Mouse Club Theme". The Duke Ellington hit "Take the 'A' Train" and Eric Coates' perennial favourite "Knightsbridge March" saw the end of the first half.

A welcome cup of tea, coffee or champagne at interval was served by the A.C.T. division members, though unlike at Marrickville the audience didn't need a winter warm-up as the Hall was most comfortably warm.

Strauss' "Springs Return" opened the second half followed by "Cascade of Stars" - a number which Tony described as "Tico Tico" like (and it was), this piece having been composed by Melbourne musicians Glen Carter and Jack Varney. "Waltz in Eb by August Durand was recalled by Tony as having been performed by the late Horace Weber at the closing of the Melbourne Capitol Wurlitzer in 1963 (perhaps some of our long time members have the L.P. of this event).

Tony then recalled the 1961 National Eistedfodd at which he performed in the Albert Hall before proceeding to the piano to play "Arabesque in D Major" by Debussy, "Scherzino" by Mendelsohn, Listz's "Hungarian Rhapsody No.6 in



Top photo:
External view of Albert Hall

Centre photo:
Interior of Albert Hall looking
towards the stage

Bottom photo:
Tony Fenelon seated at the
white and gold console

Db", and concluded with Chopin's "Troise-cossaise". Personally speaking though, I would have preferred to have heard the piano in duet with the organ though Tony's piano performances are always superb. The piano, however, in spite of being a small grand, was "only just a piano".

Returning to the organ console Tony gave us a Journey through the Organ based on "When the Saints Go Marching In", "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was followed by a contrasting Hawaiian selection "Blue Hawiia". "Lovely Hula Hands" and the "Hawaiian Wedding Song". The last selection recalled the organ's British origins with "Rule Britannia" and concluding with "Men of Harlech" (the title of the other piece escapes me) - a brief version of Waltzing Matilda to remind us of the organ's new location concluded the the opening concert. Tony was called back for an encore "Washington Post March".

T.O.S.A. (A.C.T. Division are to be congratulated on the years of effort (sometimes only by a few really hard workers) their organ is now up and playing reliably. The installation has been completed to a high standard throughout, though of necessity is a little on the 'compact' size in the chamber area (they were restricted to some 9 feet only of the back stage area). The organ console just has to be one of the best looking, best proportioned Compton consoles ever built by that firm, it looks somewhat of a cross between a Kimball (with the end towers on the top) and a Wurlitzer "French front", lovely! The pipework has been restored and revoiced by organ builder George Stephens though at this stage some tonal balancing is still to be completed. The English Horn stop fabricated by George (as is the one at Marrickville) was a most necessary tonal addition to the instrument which at the rear of the Hall lacks volume and presence with a capacity audience. As with most organs which have just "opened" much still remains to be done, not the least of these things is to somehow adjust the swell shutter openings so the sound "gets out" into the hall - a challenge indeed. Other fine adjustments will come with time and experimentation as they do with all these instruments. Congratulations to the people of the A.C.T. Division, you are well on the road to having a fine instrument.

CANBERRA OPENS ITS COMPTON
by Ian McLean

The disarmingly attractive MP for Canberra, Ros Kelly, performed the official honours at this much awaited opening concert. The audience had to wait a little longer than planned for the formalities as the capacity audience was guided into the almost 60 year old, but very stylish Albert Hall. Limited access was due to the fact there is only one aisle and this caused some congestion and problems for the TOSA ACT ushers because of the size of the audience.

Compere, Clinton White, told the audience that this was "the first time that this organ was to be heard in Australia" and he therefore correctly described this concert as its real Australian "premiere". Clinton seemed very proud to be associated with this event, and he had every right to feel that way. I understand that it was due in no small part to his efforts that the extensive media and press coverage plus FREE TV, press and radio advertising occurred as it did. Clinton and the TOSA ACT committee deserve much commendation for the professionalism of this aspect of the concert. A very good omen for future TOSA ACT concert promotions.

More production professionalism could be seen in the quite classy programme which deserved its \$3.00 cost even if some around me were heard to complain (What do some people need to be impressed - to hell with them I thought!).

Through the quite awful Albert Hall public address system (I hope they hire a better system for the next concert) Clinton introduced the artist for this special concert - TONY FENELON. The moment was at hand. An air of electric expectation overtook the

Hall. So many years work. So many expended hours and emotions. So many things were to come to realisation for so many people whose lives this instrument had touched as Tony took to the console with the Broadway show number "Step To The Rear". This opening piece revealed so many good and bad things about the Compton that were naturally repeatedly heard through the remainder of Tony's programme which included the overture from "Die Flaudermaus", "Midnight In Mayfair", "Delicado", "Hi Lilli Hi Lo", "I Know Him So Well" from Chess and a quite superb arrangement of "Scarborough Fair".

Those numbers were followed by a special 'kids' bracket that started with "Its A Small World" done in the best 'pizza' style with a closer of the "Mickey Mouse" march, which, it may surprise you, really showed off the quite remarkable talents of this organist at his best.

A real delight and surprise was to hear that TOSA ACT had managed to squeeze in the much needed addition to this organ's specification, a Posthorn rank, even if it was voiced somewhat too bright in parts for the rest of the organ. A well used novelty feature of the first half was the bird whistle which the audience seemed to find so entertaining, and, Tony, so unique. After all, as he pointed out, they don't work on so many theatre pipe organs.

Following the 'kids' medley I thought that the somewhat nervous Tony Fenelon had settled down, but, he then attempted the Duke Ellington jazz classic, "Take the A Train", which required a sympathetically quick Cymbal action but this was not to be found and so, as the Cymbal wouldn't fire each time Tony touched a pedal, it threw his composure out again - not that

the ordinary listener would have noticed - I hope.

This reviewer really felt for Tony as some of the Compton's idiosyncrasies revealed to us so far included; quite variable response rates; some terrible tremulant settings; piles of noise; an occasional blurping Tuba; the 'phantom gremlin' Posthorn (which was turned so professionally into an entertainment piece by Tony) and some tuning irregularities. Still, as he always does, this master of the keyboards very nearly kept these problems hidden from his audience (even the local 'Canberra Times' reviewer!). Not only that but he also managed to appear his usual bright self and almost made it appear effortless, which, I can assure anyone reading this, it wasn't!

On top of having an incomplete instrument to play which was simply not sufficiently well prepared for this opening concert, Tony had to contend with the fact that TOSA ACT had made no effort whatsoever to design and manufacture a projection shell that would help the sound out from the back of the stage where the organ's chambers are located. This was despite advice from a number of people, including this writer, that the small proscenium opening on the stage together with the velvet curtains and velvet skys would impede the successful egress and development of the Compton's sound into the Hall. Instead, there were curtains obscuring a portion of the shutter openings through which the pipes spoke! Why? As a result the organ sounded a bit dead and confined and was without the all encompassing sound that can be expected from a truly effective theatre pipe organ. Of course this was not the case for those sitting quite far forward in the Hall, but, for those sitting farther back and especially those

upstairs it was a problem that caused some disparaging remarks to be heard at intermission and after the show.

The final number in the first half from the now, somewhat beleaguered Tony Fenelon, was the English composer, Eric Coates composition, "Knightsbridge March" and although Tony presented this piece with aplomb there was no 'English' style registration to accompany this English march which I must admit, I was expecting. Intermission provided an opportunity to talk to a broad spectrum of listeners, from the ultra critical to the very uncritical. There were some that said the organ was "fantastic", others who said it was "nice", others who stated their disappointment with comments like "it's dead", and even one who described the Tibia/Krumet combination when tremmed, as a "hirdy giridy"!

Certainly the Compton showed many times during this performance an inability to blend effectively and the poor winding of the instrument was responsible for a number of other irregularities that I am sure will be remedied in the coming months. Regrettably, the use of Australia's premier theatre pipe organ technician, George Stephens, to do electrical fault finding instead of the voicing work for which he felt he should have been there, meant that we haven't heard anything like the real ensemble and individual tones that this Compton will eventually produce, and should have produced at this concert.

After consuming champagne and other refreshments the audience forced its way back into the Hall and "flicker fingers" Fenelon quickly got on with the show. After a Strauss number, then a latin influenced "Cascade of Stars" (which once again demonstrated the clarity and

imbalance of the Glockenspiel and Xylophone with regard to the pipework) and the waltz in E flat made famous by old time Melbourne theatre organist Horace Weber, Tony moved over to the small Kawai grand and presented some glorious piano performances. Well, nearly all glorious.

It was interesting to compare just how well the grand piano, even with its insubstantial size, managed to fill the Hall placed as it was so much further towards the front of the stage. It had also been even more interesting to note how much more clarity there was from the organ itself once the reflective lid of the piano had been placed into position for the second half. This seemed to prove conclusively just how much organ sound was being lost on stage as the pipe sounds were being reflected upwards and backwards onto the chamber fronts from the piano lid and out onto to audience. But, back to the piano. Tony's true class as a musician, I felt, had been limited on the Compton by its shortcomings. The piano "my first love" as he explained, showed just what musical class this man has in performances of Debussy's "Arabesque in D Major", Felix Mendelsohn's "Scherzo", Franz Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody #6 in D flat" and Frederic Chopin's "Trois Ecosaise". With the exception of the Liszt the piano coped extremely well, however the Liszt was simply too much for the size and ordinariness of the little Kawai. A \$70,000 9' Yamaha CF2 was available free of charge to the Society - I don't know why they didn't use it. It was interesting to hear the Liszt on this piano. I didn't consider it a very good performance especially having heard just how well Tony can play it as I did a few nights earlier in Melbourne. Hopefully the next time TOSA ACT has an artist of Tony's monumental pianism they will provide them with an

instrument to match.

A "journey through the organ" was next which quite enthralled the audience and showed just what extraordinary flexibility there is in a theatre organ. Again, this was Tony at his best, improvising as he went and showing any electronic organ demonstrator just why he has been in such demand in that guise as well. It was interesting to be able to hear each rank of the pipework and effect, separately, for it demonstrated quite clearly to those more seasoned theatre organ listeners in the audience, and there were quite a few of them including over 100 from Sydney alone, the poor tremulant, regulation and winding problems that abound in this Compton.

The "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was next and despite, as my handwritten notes stated earlier on, "the artistry of TF overcomes all" he couldn't disguise the now very glaring fact that the organ was now going very flat. The technical gurus afterwards considered that this had to be because the cold air was being drawn in from under the stage and not from the heated Hall.

Due to Tony's recent successful holiday and concert cruise through Hawaii we were treated to an "In Memory of Hawaii" selection which was OK but marred for me by the ludicrously fast Vibraphone speed which sounded not unlike something throttling a gnu! After a short acknowledgement speech about TOSA, the organ and George Stephens, where Tony always says the right thing to keep the TOSA people happy, we were treated to a selection of "British things" but, again without any 'British' theatre organ styled registrations or interpretation which is probably just as well as Tony doesn't like or empathise

with those styles. The "British" selection was ended with a very corny and, out of place interpretation of "Waltzing Matilda", and that was the end of this still most interesting and successful show, except for the necessary and deserved encore which in this case, was the march, "Star and Stripes" played with much gusto by Mr Fenelon.

In summary, a very successfully mounted opening concert, played by a very fine musician on an instrument, which even in its incomplete and rather unrefined state seemed, from my observations, to have pleased the majority of the audience. Despite this I still don't consider the gamble of opening the organ in its present state to have been justified. It just wasn't only incomplete but insufficiently well prepared. However, the proof of the pudding will be the next few concerts. Why? Firstly to see how many will return from this concert and, secondly to see if TOSA ACT can improve the organ sufficiently at each succeeding concert. Concertgoers may be forgiving at an opening concert, but, now they've heard it they will expect even better from the Compton next time. I would even expect that the "Canberra Times" music critic, Bill Hoffman, will not be as kind as he has - "it is a magnificent instrument of its type" - he stated, unless TOSA ACT gets up and fixes the voicing, regulation and egress problems pretty quickly. Possibly he will also get the message that theatre organs, including this example, are based on the Tibia, as explained by Tony during the concert, and not the Diapason as he stated in his "Canberra Times" review of this concert. Although, with velvet drapery covering up some of the solo chamber from whence the Tibia emanates he could be forgiven for that mistake!

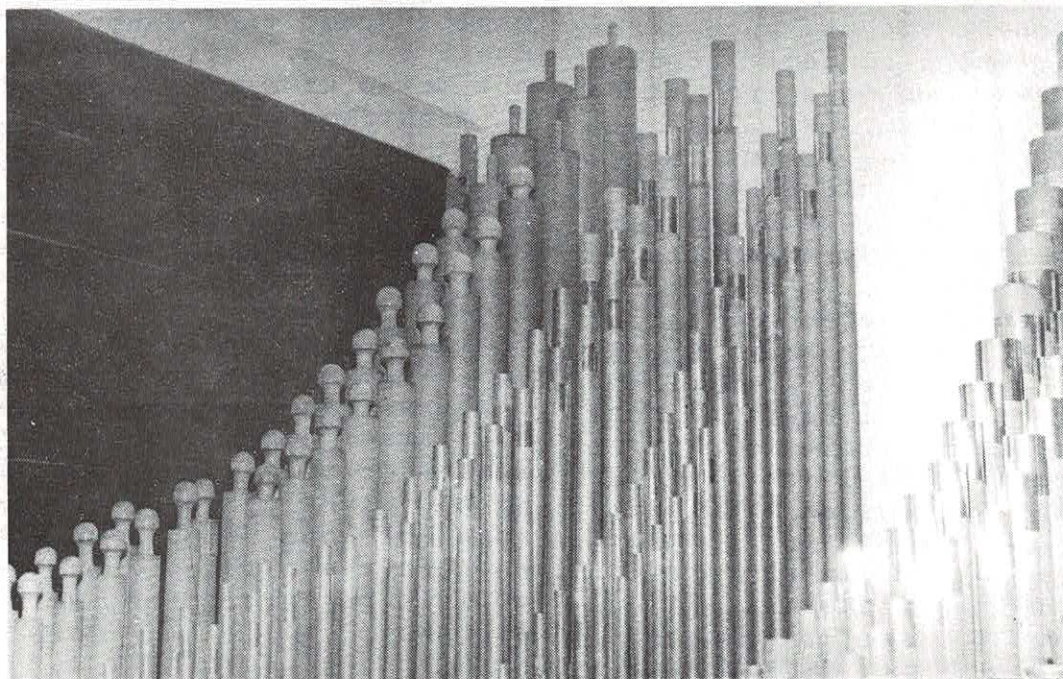
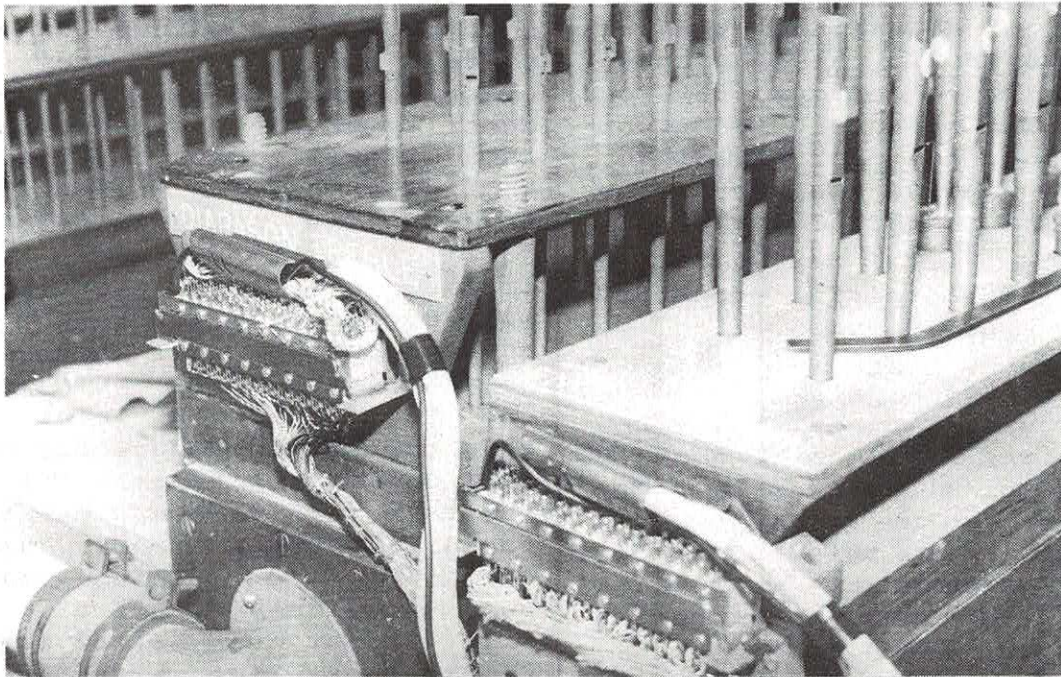
For those of you who might want

to hear the Compton played with some "English" style you will have to come to the next planned concert which will be played by Ray Thornley. He does both the U.S. and English styles pretty well - and, he enjoys them both!

Personally, I found the organ varying from pleasing and surprising to disappointing. With the most disappointing being the quite ghastly and, to quote someone else, "hirdy giridy", sound of the Krumet and Tibia ranks tremmed. Fenelon was remarkable as usual, but completely drained at the end of it all. There remains an enormous amount of work to be done.

This is only the beginning for TOSA ACT and their Compton but, even given all the problems and shortcomings of the instrument, I would have to rate this concert a success. However, to give that comment some relativity, it was not as successful musically as the Capri Wurlitzer (Adelaide), Karrinyup Wurlitzer (Perth) and especially the Ballarat Compton opening concerts. Just the same that person on the ACT committee who said privately to me that this concert was going to be a "disaster" musically will have to eat his words now. For a disaster, it certainly was not and even better is yet to come.

Congratulations TOSA ACT and Tony Fenelon.



Top photo:- A view looking into the solo chamber.
Bottom photo:- The main chamber. From L to R are the stopped flute, two ranks of strings and the diapason rank. The dark area on the left are the shutters.

TOSA ACT's 3/9 COMPTON THEATRE PIPE ORGANSPECIFICATION

- * - not yet operational
+ - additional pipes required

| <u>Great</u> | | <u>*Solo</u> | |
|------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| *English Horn (TC) | 16 | English Horn | 8 |
| Krummet (TC) | 16 | Krummet | 8 |
| Tuba | 16 | Tuba | 8 |
| +Contra Viol | 16 | Diapason | 8 |
| Vox Humana (TC) | 16 | Violin | 8 |
| *English Horn | 8 | Vox Humana | 8 |
| Krummet | 8 | Tibia | 8 |
| Tuba | 8 | Tibia | 4 |
| Diapason | 8 | Twelfth (Tibia) | 2 2/3 |
| Viol/Viol Celeste | 8 | Piccolo (Tibia) | 2 |
| Vox Humana | 8 | Tierce (Tibia) | 1 3/5 |
| Tibia | 16 | Solo Sub | |
| Tibia | 8 | Unison Off | |
| Tibia | 5 1/3 | Solo Super | |
| Tibia | 4 | Glockenspiel | |
| Twelfth (Tibia) | 2 2/3 | Xylophone | |
| Piccolo (Tibia) | 2 | Vibraphone/Chrysoglott | |
| Tierce | 1 3/5 | Chimes | |
| Tuba | 4 | | |
| Diapason | 4 | <u>Accompaniment</u> | |
| Viol/Viol Celeste | 4 | *English Horn | 8 |
| Vox Humana | 4 | Krummet | 8 |
| +Bourdon | 16 | Tuba | 8 |
| Flute | 8 | Diapason | 8 |
| Flute | 4 | Violin | 8 |
| Flautino (Flute) | 2 | Violin Celeste | 8 |
| Tierce (Flute) | 1 3/5 | Vox Humana | 8 |
| Glockenspiel | | Tibia | 8 |
| Vibraphone/Chrysoglott | | Tibia | 4 |
| Xylophone | | Twelfth (Tibia) | 2 2/3 |
| Great Sub | | Tuba | 4 |
| Unison Off | | Diapason | 4 |
| Great Super | | Violin | 4 |
| Solo to Great | | | |

Pedal

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Tuba | 16 |
| Tibia | 16 |
| +Bourdon | 16 |
| *English Horn | 8 |
| Tuba | 8 |
| Diapason | 8 |
| Tibia | 8 |
| Violoncello | 8 |
| Flute | 8 |
| Tibia | 4 |
| Cymbal Tap | |
| Bass Drum Tap F | |
| Bass Drum Tap P | |
| Cymbal Crash | |
| Drum Roll | |
| Triangle | |
| Traps to 2nd Touch | |
| Acc to Pedal | |
| Great to Pedal | |
| Solo to Pedal | |

Tremulants

Tibia
Tuba
Krummet/Vox
Diap/Flute/Viol/Celeste

Pistons

6 Double Touch to Great and Acc
6 Single Touch to Solo
6 Single Touch General
3 Single Touch Toe Studs

Accompaniment (cont.)

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Violin Celeste | 4 |
| Vox Humana | 4 |
| Flute | 8 |
| Flute | 4 |
| Flautino (Flute) | 2 |
| Acc Super | |
| Vibraphone/Chrysoglott | |
| Snare Drum | |
| Cymbal | |
| Sleigh Bells | |
| Tambourine | |
| Castanets | |
| Tom-Tom | |
| Chinese Block | |

*Accompaniment 2nd Touch

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| English Horn | 8 |
| Tuba | 8 |
| Diapason | 8 |
| Tibia | 8 |
| Piccolo (Tibia) | 4 |
| Triangle | |
| Brush Cymbal | |
| Glockenspiel | |
| Solo to Acc 2nd | |

Other Controls

Yamaha Programmable Auto Rhythm
Rotor Button
Solo and Main Swell Pedals
Crescendo Pedal

EFFECTS (Operated by Toe Studs)

Birds, Firebell, Doorbell, Auto Horn,
Cymbal Roll, Syren, Snare Drum/Grand
Crash, Engine, Steamboat.

THEATRE ORGANS OF AUSTRALIA.

New South Wales.

| Instrument | Current Location | Original Location | Comments |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| 4/21 Wurlitzer | State Theatre, Sydney | | Only original in theatre installation left in the country - played periodically for shows. |
| 2/10 Christie | Lyceum Theatre, Sydney | | Rebuilt 1965 after fire partially destroyed the theatre - organ stoplist altered and "straightened" at this time - some tonal percussions added recently. |
| 2/11 Wurlitzer | Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville | Prince Edward Theatre, Sydney | Owned by T.O.S.A. (N.S.W. Division) - English Horn rank added 1978. |
| 2/11 Wurlitzer | Willoughby Civic Centre, Chatswood | Arcadia Theatre, Chatswood | Organ playable soon - English Horn rank added during rebuilding. New electronic relay to control instrument being incorporated. |
| 2/9 Christie | Epping Baptist Church Epping. | Duke of York Theatre, Eastwood | Rebuilt 1983 - 1985. Concert Flute and String Celeste added and most usual percussion stops again to be added to the instrument. |
| 3/8 Wurlitzer | Mecca Theatre, Kogarah. | A.B.C. Ritz Theatre, Richmond, U.K. | replaced original 2/7 Christie. |
| 2/8 Christie | St. Columb's Church, West Ryde. | Kings Theatre, Gordon. | most percussions removed - remainder of stoplist is intact. |
| 2/10 Wurlitzer | Uniting Church, Burwood. | Kings Cross Theatre, Savoy Theatre, Hurstville. | Percussions removed, Kinura replaced by additional flute rank. |
| 3/15 Wurlitzer | Private residence Sydney. | Regent Theatre, Sydney. | |
| 2/13 Wurlitzer | Private residence | Civic Theatre, Auburn. | Australian Wurlitzer agent Crowle's second demonstrator instrument. |

THEATRE ORGANS OF AUSTRALIA ... cont.

| Instrument | Current Location | Original Location | Comments |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 3/15 Wurlitzer | Private residence Lawson, N.S.W. | Regent Theatre, Brisbane. | Only 3 manual "French Console" imported into Australia |
| <u>Queensland.</u> | | | |
| 3/8 Christie | Kelvin Grove High School Auditorium, Brisbane. | Granada Theatre, Maidstone, Kent. U.K. | Original console flood damaged in theatre, replaced with 2 manual now enlarged to 3 manual console from New Empire Theatre, Dunedin. N.Z. |
| 3/7 Compton | Private residence, Brisbane. | Regal Theatre, Chester, U.K. | Melotone unit removed - Wurlitzer chimes and Kimball Vox Humana added. |
| <u>Australian Capital Territory.</u> | | | |
| 3/9 Compton | Albert Hall, Canberra | Gaumont Palace Cinema Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, U.K. | English Horn and Rhythm Unit added during rebuild. |
| <u>Victoria.</u> | | | |
| 3/15 Wurlitzer | Dendy Theatre, Brighton. | Capitol Theatre, Melbourne. | Owned by T.O.S.A. (Victoria Division) - now reinstalled in New Dendy Theatre. |
| 4/22 Wurlitzer | Moorabbin Town Hall, Moorabbin. | State Theatre, Melbourne | Original Wurlitzer grand piano attached - English Horn rank added. |
| 2/9 Blackett & Howden | Village Theatre, Reservoir. | Princess Theatre, South Shields Newcastle on Tyne, UK. | 2-manual Christie console ex Lyceum Theatre, Sydney - Wurlitzer wood Tibia added to complete original metal tibia. |

THEATRE ORGANS OF AUSTRALIA ... cont.

| Instrument | Current Location | Original Location | Comments |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 2/9 Wurlitzer | Private residence Melbourne. | Trocette Theatre, Bermondsey, London. | 2-manual "French Console". |
| 2/7 Wurlitzer | Private residence Geelong, Vic. | Crowle Residence, Sydney. | Original Wurlitzer demonstration organ - first Wurlitzer exported from the USA. - roll player attached. |
| 3/8 Compton | Memorial Theatre Ballarat. | (A.B.C) Ritz Theatre, Warrington, Lancs. UK. | Owned by T.O.S.A. (Western Victoria Divn.) Oboe Horn rank added. |
| <u>Tasmania.</u> | | | |
| 3/8 Wurlitzer | St. Michael's School, Hobart. | Madam Tussaud's Cinema, London. | Console damaged during World War II - new 3 manual console built by Wurlitzer U.K. |
| <u>South Australia.</u> | | | |
| 4/16 Hybrid. | Capri Cinema, Goodwood. | | comprises Wurlitzer, Christie & Connacher pipework. Wurlitzer second console from State Theatre, Melbourne. TOSA (S.A. Divn) own theatre and organ. |
| 2/12 Wurlitzer | Pulteney Grammar School, Adelaide. | Plaza Theatre, Melbourne. | Instrument owned by TOSA. (S.A. Divn) - organ enlarged by 4 ranks on installation in Plaza. |
| 2/8 Christie | Private residence Adelaide. | Plaza, Sydney. - Savoy, Enfield, Sydney. | |
| <u>Western Australia.</u> | | | |
| 3/12 Wurlitzer | Karrinyup Community Centre, Perth. | Metro Theatre, Perth. | Console originally 2-manuals, recently replaced with 3-manual unit. 3 additional ranks are planned. |

THEATRE ORGANS OF AUSTRALIA ... concluded.

| Instrument | Current Location | Original Location | Comments |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 3/10 Compton | Purvisonic Sound Studio Perth. | Plaza Theatre, Worthing, Sussex. U.K. | Illuminated surround currently removed. |

The preceeding is a list of all operating Theatre Organs in Australia (Errors and omissions excepted). Any further details, updates or correspondence thereto should be directed to the Editor.