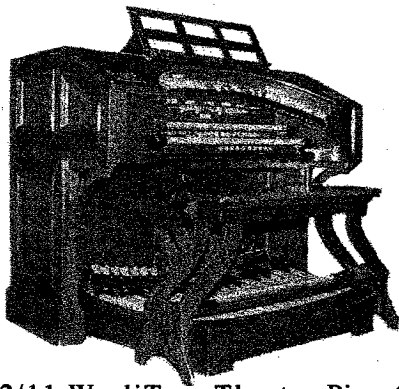
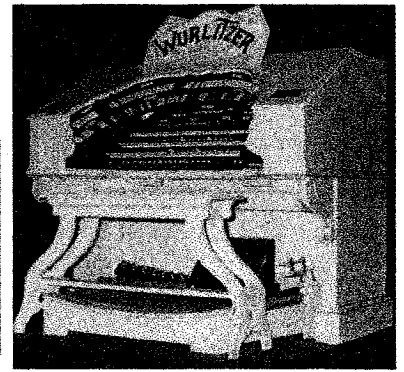


MARCH, 2002



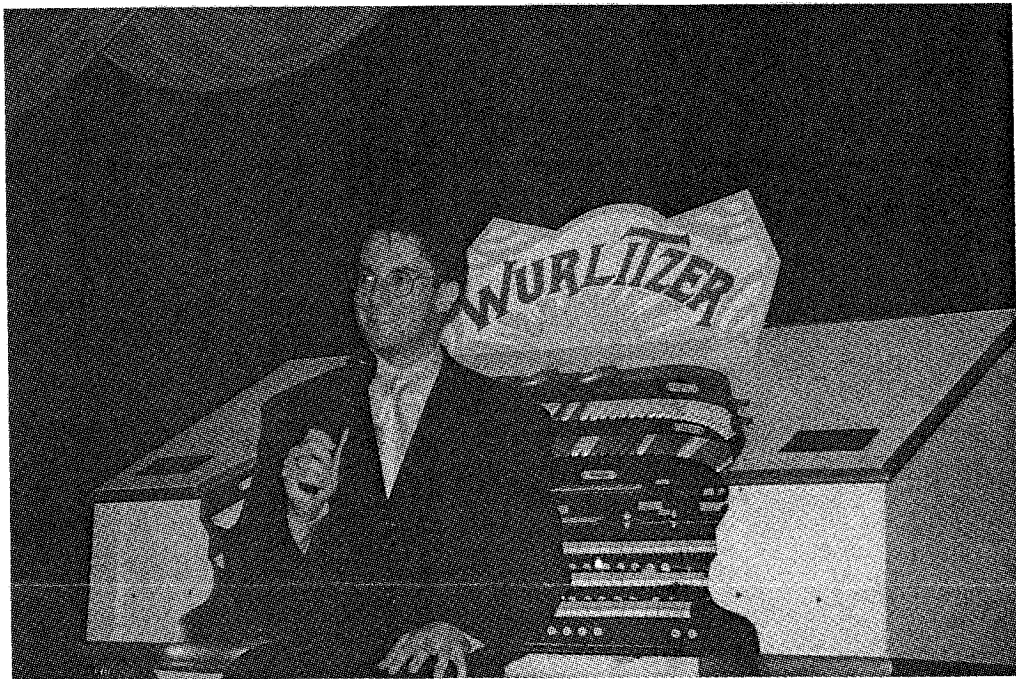
2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

TOSA NEWS



3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Welcome Back Home To *John Giacchi*



With Special Guests, Singing Stars
Sussane Towers and *Peter Avery* (See page 7)
Sunday, 17th March, at 2pm

Marrickville Town Hall

Volume 41

Issue 2

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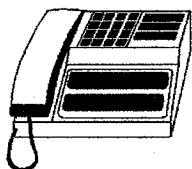
MARCH, 2002

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TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - EDITOR
All numbers use the prefix 02

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COMING EVENTS

MARCH

- Monday 4 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 14 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Sunday 17 at 2.00pm John Giacchi Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Saturday 23 at 1.00pm Ian Davies and Friends
Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club
1 Gary Street, Bondi Junction
Thursday 28 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

APRIL

- Monday 8 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 11 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Saturday 13 at 2.00pm Members' Afternoon
Mosman Baptist Church

MAY

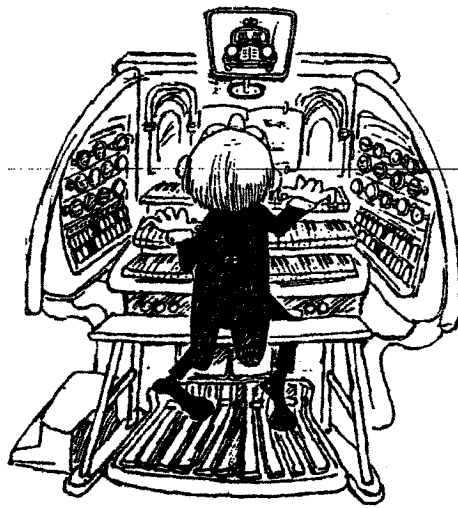
- Sunday 5 at 2.00pm Tony Fenelon Concert
Marrickville Town Hall
Monday 6 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Thursday 9 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm
Thursday 23 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

From The President

Thank you, Chris McPhee, for your Orion concert! You won the hearts of all us Sydney oldies on your very first TOSA concert here - and the feeling is still there - not to mention the entertaining music!

To those affected - my apology that there was no Players' Evening on 28th February at Marrickville. The Opera people were back in! Should be OK for March 28th. April 25th is Anzac Day, so we'll skip that one too.

Now we're looking forward to John Giacchi's March concert at Marrickville on Sunday 17th. Apart from the fact that he played great music, I got a lot of enjoyment out of listening to John's arrangements and harmonies last time. You can tell he enjoys the feel of the music.



As a bonus, we have been in touch with Peter and Sussane Avery, and it looks like they will be doing a couple of brackets of songs, accompanied by John on the *Wurlitzer*. Peter and Sussane will be known to many of our members - they sing a wide variety of songs, but are known for their excellent rendition of Nelson Eddy / Jeanette MacDonald pieces. Get your tickets!

See you there !

Watch this space,

Walter Pearce

Editorial

Thank you to the contributing members again this month, especially Neil Palmer, John Batts and Ron Ivin. Neil Palmer provided some nice shots of the Roxy Theatre, Parramatta (pages 5 and 6). Apologies if they don't copy too well!

John Batts has supplied a couple of interesting items from his Ottawa Newsletter (page 8).

Ron Ivin has done an excellent job of giving everyone, especially those who weren't there, an idea of the enjoyable Chris McPhee concert on 3rd February (pages 10-11).

Without hard-working members like these who spare a thought for the Editor and the blank pages of *TOSA News*, there would be no "news" in *TOSA News*!

Remember if you see something suitable for publication, please send it along so that all members can share the entertainment.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

Don't forget the FREE theatre organ entertainment with

"Ian Davies and Friends" at Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club 1 Gray

Street, Bondi Junction

Saturday, 23rd March, at 1.00pm.

(See page 9 for more details!)

STOP PRESS :

TOSA member, Colin Adamson, has just informed us that he will be giving a *FREE* lunch-time recital at St John's Anglican Cathedral, Parramatta (between Hunter and Church Streets) on Wednesday, 27th March, from 12.30 until 1.10pm

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

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



Two letters commenting thoughtfully on the issue of non-Wurlitzer additions to our concerts:

8/2/02

Stephen Bosanquet (*From the Mailbox*, Jan/Feb TOSA News) is right to complain about the inclusion of other items where a concert has been advertised for Campsie or Marrickville, and is therefore implicitly a Wurlitzer concert.

If the advertisement does not state otherwise, prospective concert-goers are entitled to assume that they are paying for a conventional Wurlitzer concert, and are entitled to object if the concert in fact includes, for example, an electronic organ, keyboard, piano, violin, or singer.

It would surely be a simple matter, when an artist is engaged, to ask whether any non-Wurlitzer items were intended and, if so, to obtain details and include them in the promotional material.

Occasional variety in concerts can be a good thing, but advertisements should give adequate notice of non-Wurlitzer items, and thus a clear choice to "take it or leave it".

Yours truly,
Frank Lewis

And also :

16/1/12

I would like to add my opinion in regard to Stephen Bosanquet's letter re David Smith's concert, which prompted me to write and protest.

That is to say, to me and several of my friends, it was a brilliant performance of skill and superb talent, that David is blessed with, and to call that beautiful instrument an imitation

machine is insulting, to say the least. It has magnificent sounds throughout, and David's playing of that magical instrument was just brilliant. It was such an added, unexpected delight to hear at our TOSA concerts.

I agree with you wholeheartedly, it is so refreshing to have unexpected, beautiful music added to the playing of the Wurlitzer, and I hope there will be other occasions that we can be delightfully entertained by David and his superb talent. I also enjoyed the singing immensely as well.

Yours sincerely,
Bettine Vallance

Bettine also included a poem written on the day of TOSA's David Smith concert :

David Smith's Superb Concert with Graham Stroud

It was an uplifting experience today,
To hear David's magical play.

The programme was one of sheer delight
So wonderfully presented in his
outstanding way.

And an added pleasure was hearing
Graham Stroud sing with his
charming voice.

And the songs he chose were such a
lovely choice.

So together, they gave us a musical
treat,

To take our minds off the present day
worries, happening around the
world that we all have to meet.

It was so uplifting in every way.

I hope more of this wonderful talent will
come to us very soon another day.

Bettine Vallance

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Solid-state Analog Technology
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In Excellent Condition
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Rodgers 805B Church
Model 2 Manual
Classical Organ

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6 Speaker Cabinets, including

2 x 15" Sub-woofers
American Walnut Finish
6 Years Old

Residence Installation
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As New Condition

Cost \$40,000.00 new but
Selling for \$25,000.00
or near offer

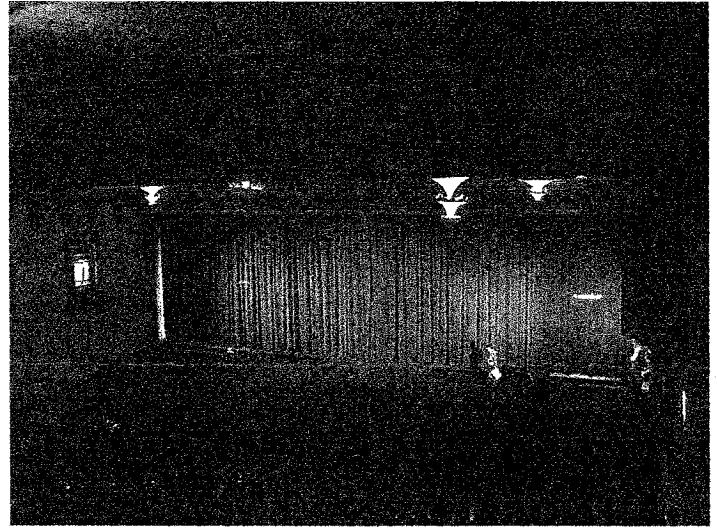
Phone Cliff Bingham on :
(02) 9987 1711

ROXY THEATRE, Parramatta

On Sunday, 11th November last year a group of TOSA members enjoyed a day out, visiting the Roxy Theatre and the State Theatre, kindly organised by member Ian Hanson, in an ancient Sydney Government bus. Neil Palmer took these photos of the Roxy, the former home of a fabulous Christie Theatre Pipe Organ.



Exterior view



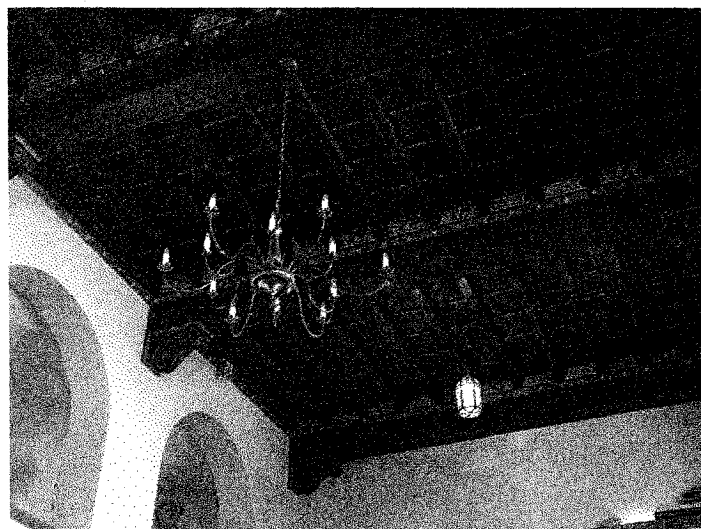
Cinema 1 proscenium in former Dress Circle



Plaster roof light fitting



Ceiling of Cinema 1



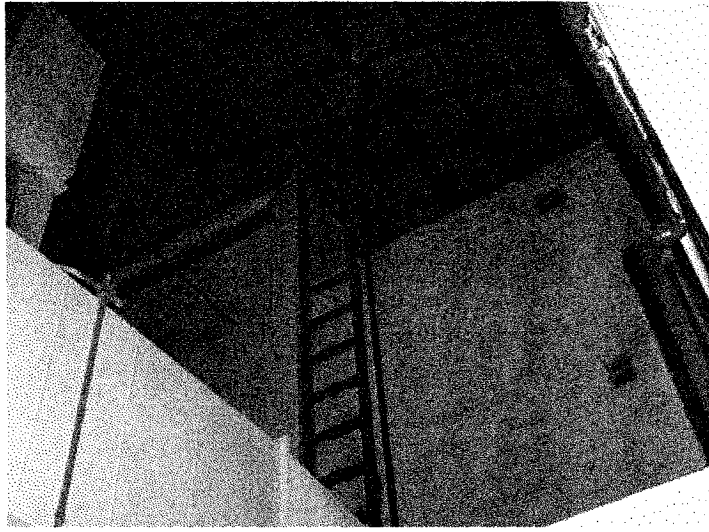
Foyer ceiling



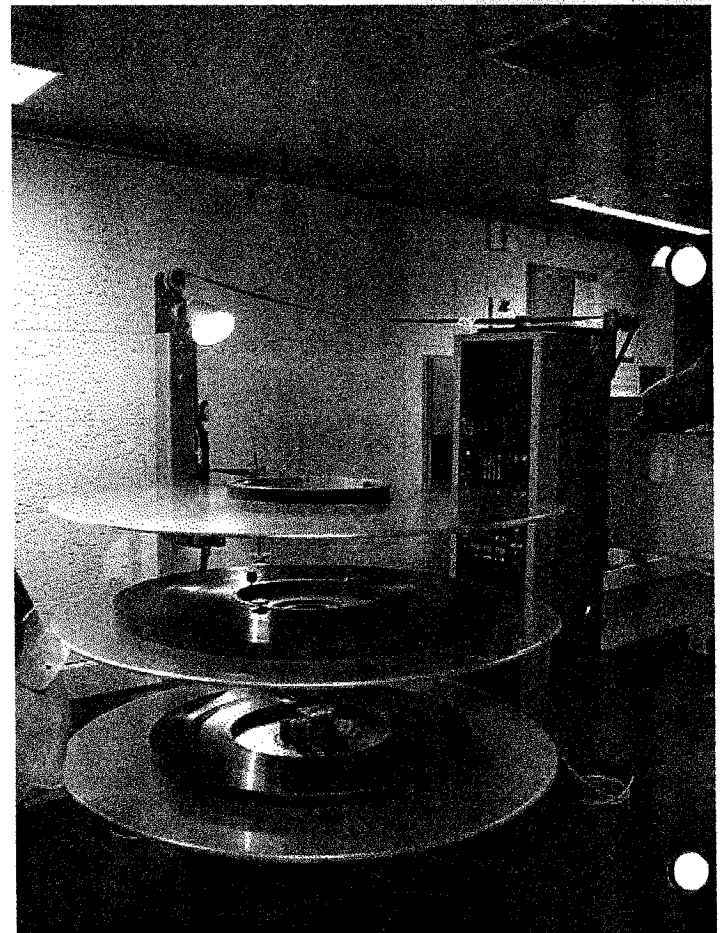
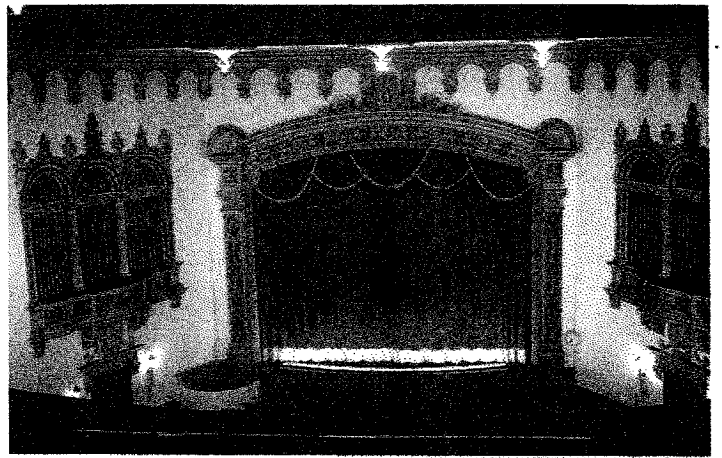
Foyer stairs to Cinema 1

Roxy Theatre (cont'd)

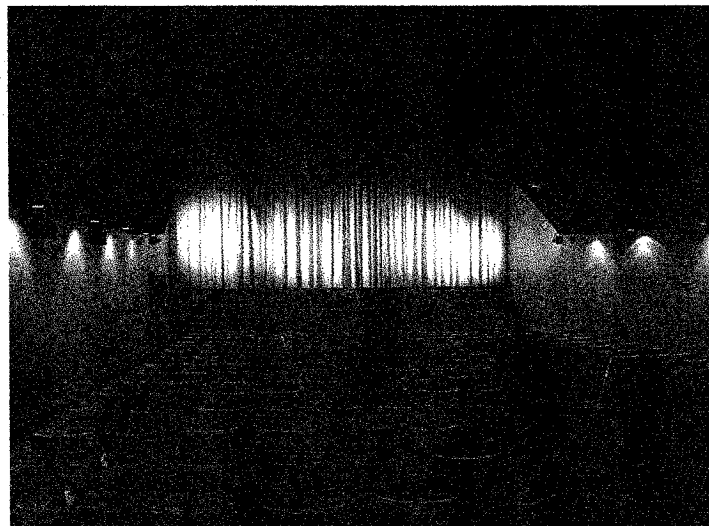
The original stage, proscenium, organ grilles and organ stand are shown in the photo to the right, taken from the Dress Circle by Ian Hanson prior to the 1974 alterations.



One of the swell shutter openings of the organ chambers



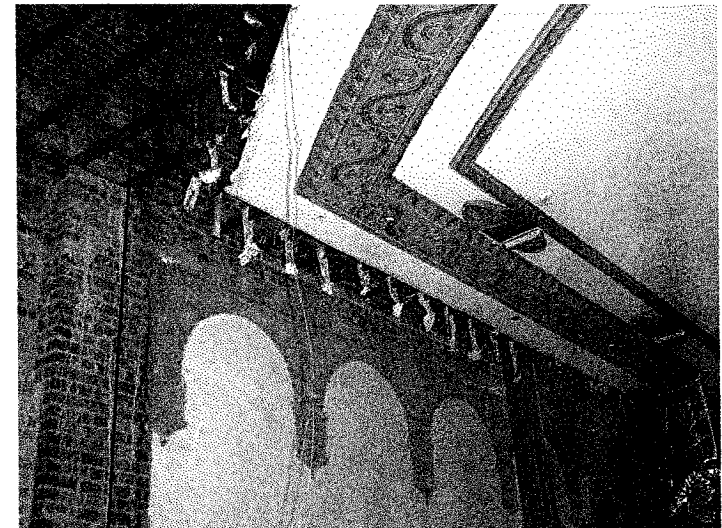
Modern film platters and projector



The small Cinema 2 - half of the original stalls area



Remains of the original stalls ceiling, backstage Cinema 1



Remains of stalls ceiling and original proscenium



Associate artists at
John Giacchi's
Marrickville
concert
(Sunday 17th
March at 2pm)
Sussane Towers
and *Peter Avery*

SUSSANE TOWERS

After graduating from the NSW Conservatorium of Music, Sussane obtained her Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees in Opera in the USA. She returned to Australia, winning a series of singing competitions, including the prestigious *Shell Aria*. Sussane enjoyed a most successful season as a cast member of Sondheim's *Into The Woods* with the Sydney Theatre Company. Other credits include *The Consul* (Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre), *Faust* (Lyric Opera of Queensland) and *Tamerlano* (University of NSW Opera), *Anna* in *The Merry Widow* (Rockdale Opera). Favourite roles she has performed include *Orlofsky* in *Die Fledermaus*, *Aldonza* in *Man Of La Mancha*, *Elisabeth* in *Robert And Elisabeth* and *Aunt Ella* in *Oklahoma*.

While Theatre is a great love for Sussane, the Concert platform is an equal passion. She has performed with *The Tony Price Ensemble*, *All Stops Out*, *Time For A Song* and a *Celebration of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy*.

Her expertise as a teacher is much in demand. She is recognised as one of the most effective managers of voices in the country.

PETER AVERY - Australian Premier Cast Member Of *The Phantom Of The Opera*

Having already won most of the aria competitions in New South Wales, Peter Avery's beautiful bass baritone voice came to national attention during ABC TV's *Quest*. Winning the Operatic Section, he went on to sing with Opera Australia, University of NSW Opera and Rockdale Opera.

A graduate of the NSW State Conservatorium, Peter's stage appearances in Music Theatre, Pantomime and Shakespeare attest to his versatility. His credits include *Tevye* in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Emile* in *South Pacific* and *Brabantio* in *Othello*, and *The Wolf* in *Little Red Ridding Hood*, an Opera for Primary Schools.

No stranger to Cabaret he presents his one man show *Me and the Musicals* to Sydney audiences. He performed two seasons of cabaret in 1999 at The School of Arts Café in Queanbeyan. A successful season of *Memories On Broadway* saw him singing to capacity houses at Panthers Leagues Club and in Back-Bar-Opera at Sydney's premier cabaret spot The Tilbury Hotel. Included in a busy schedule for the year were performances of the role of *Michele* in Puccini's opera *Il Tabarro*.

Audiences often remark on how much Peter's voice is like that of Nelson Eddy and with wife Sussane, he has been creating a resurgence of nostalgic euphoria among the devoted Jeanette and Nelson fans singing the songs that the Hollywood film idols made famous in *A Celebration Of Jeanette MacDonald & Nelson Eddy*.

With Sussane he presents *Classic Phantom Magic*, a show about that masterpiece of Lloyd Webber's with all the great songs and an intriguing script recounting what it was like on the other side of the footlights.

In 2001 we celebrated the Centenary of Federation. What better time to revive the memory of one of Australia's most famous singers, Peter Dawson. Peter's *On The Road To Peter Dawson* does just that. Already acclaimed for the fine singing of Dawson's most famous songs and the unique approach to tracing the great man's career *On The Road ...* is proving to be a very popular show.

Two Items from the *May 2001 Newsletter* of the Ottawa Valley Theatre Organ Society Inc.

Supplied by its Editor (and TOSA member), John S. Batts

Why “MIGHTY WURLITZER”?

“The name *Wurlitzer* became synonymous with the theatre organ in the 1920s in the same way that *Victrola* did with the phonograph.

“The Wurlitzer firm built 2000 theatre organs ... more than twice as many as its nearest competitor, Robert Morton.

“Wurlitzer’s finest example was installed in the Paramount Theatre, New York, where it was played by Jesse Crawford.

“Its largest instrument was installed at Radio City Music Hall [NYC]

“Other manufacturers included Barton, Kimball, and Moller. In the 1920s there were more than 60 firms building organs.” (from David Junchen in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 4 vols. ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie, New York; Macmillan, 1986 IV pp. 369-70).

To that one might add that in total Wurlitzer made a little over 2,200 theatre organs, 145 of them in 1923.

“Cinema Organ”

I picked up Volume 3 of *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* to seek “Theatre Organ”, and there sure enough, were several columns about organs in theatres during the 17th and 18th centuries but little more.

Backwards to Volume 1. This, after all, was an English compilation, so the key was, of course, “Cinema Organ”.

My confidence was immediately boosted as I saw an accompanying photograph of the 4-manual Granada Tooting, *Wurlitzer*. However, it was going to be one of those occasions of mixed blessings. The photo announced “Cinema Organ by the Wurlitzer Company, Chicago” - sigh!

Unless this counted as a picture credit, it’s misleading. The Wurlitzer Company did not move to Chicago until 1941 and continued making its electronic organs in North Tonawanda from 1947 well into the 1960s.

Still, the prose entry seemed to have been the work of English organist Reginald Foort and reads well enough, though that threadbare old joke about the colourful appearance of cinema or theatre-organ consoles is incomprehensibly included.

Brace your ribs for this one, for if you are lucky you may not yet have heard it: “The President of the Royal College of Organists was heard to remark [one imagines that the apocryphal nature of this would have alerted any sensible editor to action red pen!] that the instrument looked more like an ice-cream stall than an organ” (p. 371). What exemplary wit! And how revealing at the same time!

What does this kind of writing add up to? Well, the Theatre Organ entry runs for just over one column, barely half a page, and the essay on the “Organ” (from antiquity to the present, mark you) runs for 78 pages. The imbalance needs no explanation for readers of these columns, but points out where the theatre organ/cinema organ stands in (or more technically “off” even “out of”) the corridors of the musical establishment.

One might have expected better from the *New Grove*, and particularly from a compilation comprehensively dealing with musical instruments, but from a North American perspective (or Antipodal for that matter since I write this in New South Wales!) it is tempting to see this as another variant but unmistakable expression of a latter-day imperialist mind-set (here translated as “If it wasn’t made or conceived in England, it can’t possibly be any good!”).

The imputed intolerance is inexcusable. Possibly it stems from that pervasive sense of English class bias

about which I wrote in the columns of *The Cinema Organ Society Journal* a couple of years ago. On the surrounding pages to *Grove*’s half page on “Cinema Organ”, almost as much space is collectively given to those other exciting instruments of the contemporary musical world, the “Chunggum,” “Cimbasso,” and the “Cimpoi” none of which are compared to ice-cream stalls but that might smack of racism, whereas in Britain the American *Wurlitzer* is always good for a laugh!

To regain my balance, these books will be flung back to the shelves, of course, because with enthusiasm, as seen at TOSA’s 2001 Festival in Brisbane, I await eagerly my next trip to Marrickville or the Orion Centre (and soon The O’Brien again). All of us in these columns need to be reminded that the theatre organ is a quite wonderful instrument for music-making and that whatever the variable merits of predominately amateur rebuilding of or maintenance of theatre organs, concert artists can rarely be accused of letting down the cause.

In the past two years I have been fortunate to attend several thoroughly musical experiences: Tony Fenel and Lyn Larsen at The Regent, David Wickerham at Moorabbin Town Hall (both venues in Melbourne, Vic.), Simon Gledhill and John Giacchi at Sydney’s Orion Centre, Neil Jensen at Marrickville Town Hall (NSW), Richard Hills at Brisbane’s Kelvin Grove High School *Christie*, Clark Wilson at Shea’s, Buffalo, and Gledhill again at Kingston’s *Kimball*. Furthermore, only one of these instruments was in its original chambers and the majority are now in the custody of “amateur” organisations, enthusiasts who lend their time and talents to preserving the glorious sounds.

Are these “facts” so difficult to ascertain? Is it not time that contemporary reference works bothered to get up to date?

A Special Event !!

Members' Afternoon - Saturday, 23rd March, at 1pm

Ian Davies at Bondi Junction

Our Patron, Ian Davies has invited all TOSA members to a special *FREE* afternoon at the club where he regularly plays. The date is Saturday, 23rd March, at 1.00pm, and the club is the Bondi Junction-Waverley RSL Club. Peter Seward and Bill Schumacher will be playing the *Rodgers* "Trio" Theatre Organ as well as Ian Davies himself, of course.

The club is at 1 Gray Street, Bondi Junction and is very close to Bondi Junction Railway Station. Parking will be available in the Grace Bros car-park until the end of the afternoon's great entertainment. Come along and enjoy a relaxing afternoon in the Club, being entertained by these first-class performers. No bookings necessary, just be there around 1.00pm!

A Profile of Ian Davies

Our long-serving and highly-respected theatre organist Patron, Ian Davies, started to study music at a very early age. He began piano lessons under the tutelage of his mother. Two years later, he became a pupil of Miss K. Cox and continued with her for 3 years.

It was at this point that the pipe organ made its entry into Ian's life. His mother frequently played the organ at St Joan's Presbyterian Church at Essendon, Victoria. Ian persuaded her to give him lessons and after 6 months he became a pupil of the organist of the church.

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

During the war, while serving in the R.A.N. overseas, Ian was guest organist at the Regal Theatre, Grays Forum Theatre, Liverpool, and the Bristol Theatre, Avonmouth, Wales.

Upon arriving back in Melbourne, he returned to the Hoyts circuits, his last theatre organ season being at the 3-manual, 15 rank *Wurlitzer* at the Capitol Theatre, where he held a 5 year residency. He then moved to Sydney and spent some years in the showrooms of Rees Wills Pty Ltd, demonstrating *Lowrey* and *Rodgers* organs.

His magnificent opening recital at the 1965 Convention of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia was long remembered by those who attended. He was also the featured opening organist at the 1966 Convention on the Capitol *Wurlitzer*. These are but two of the many memorable programmes he has played and which made Ian Davies so popular with TOSA members. He played over 90 concerts for the NSW Division during his long association with TOSA, always drawing a large crowd of devoted fans.

For many years Ian has been resident organist at the Bondi-Waverley RSL Club, playing each Friday for an hour in the club's auditorium for the pleasure of the club's members and guests.

In 1972 following the retirement of Reginald Dixon from the Blackpool Tower and from the position of Patron of TOSA (NSW), Ian was elected to the position, and to this day he remains faithfully still as our Patron.

He has always been ready to give of his many talents for the members of our Society and we are sure that many members will appreciate the opportunity to hear Ian play again at the Bondi-Waverley RSL Club, in the company of some of our other player members. Come along and bring a friend to this special event, which you are certain to enjoy.

Report on Chris McPhee's Recital

Sunday 3rd February

by Ron Ivin

Orion Centre Campsie

The weather was kind and so a nice crowd was in attendance to hear Chris McPhee's Recital. At the outset I should say that I have had only three opportunities to hear this talented young performer and today we witnessed quite noticeable advancement both in his playing and presentation.

After the concert I had the pleasure of meeting this young gentleman. I congratulated him on his ability to entertain the audience with his somewhat humorous patter between numbers, unlike some other performers. I have heard criticisms like, "Too much talk and not enough playing" or "I came to hear the organ, not a lot of gaff." Chris's comments were enlightening too, which, I feel, added to the performance. If you haven't already done so, I recommend that you read the leaflet that was handed out at the concert which outlines the remarkable achievements accredited to Chris in only a relatively short musical career. We wish him the very best of success in the future.

As I was half an hour late for the concert, I am indebted to Wendy Hambly for filling me in on the first few items.

A bright march is a good choice to put the audience in a receptive frame of mind. John Philip Sousa was a prolific writer in this field. Perhaps his best known is *Stars and Stripes for Ever* but Chris chose one that is not heard all too often; *El Capitan*. This rendition displayed the full capabilities of the Orion with suitable additions of Chrysoglott and Glockenspiel.

Next we heard *Since You Went Away* coupled to *Together* introduced by full organ and then reducing to Clarinet with Glockenspiel and ending with delightful tones from the Tibias.

Il Postino is probably recognised

more easily as the theme music for the film, *The Apartment*. It was heard with splendid use of soft Tibias with gradual increases in the stops - a pleasure to listen to.

The lively, snappy piece, *Java*, demonstrated the instant response of the organ, not like the old days, waiting, waiting, waiting. This was a very good treatment of an standard novelty. Chris must have done a lot of scales practice.

After a robust start, *I Remember You* cut back to a plaintive Tibia sound, followed by a jazzy feel leading back to full organ. These endings employing Harp runs are the envy of those who would like to be able to play them.

It's a shame there weren't any children in the audience because they love *Willy Wonker and the Chocolate Factory*. Chris had put his imagination to work with this arrangement. He really caught the spirit of the composer's intentions, with lots of florid work throughout.

Jerome Kern is a favourite of many. *Show Boat* pieces such as *Old Man River* and *Can't Help Lovin' that Man* had a broad romantic appeal. But then his versatility led him to write bright pieces, standards such as *Pick Yourself Up, I've Told Every Little Star* and the one Chris chose to play, *She Didn't Say Yes*. This put us in a 'toe-tapping' mood and ended all too quickly. I felt like calling out, "Play it again, Sam". Quite delightful!

It was almost like going from the ridiculous to the sublime with the next offering being *On with the Motly*. Heaps of credit go to Chris for his presentation of this operatic number.

Well we are certainly getting a variety - light, heavy, and now

dreamy. One of 'the chairman of the board' (Frank Sinatra)'s songs was *In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning*, a praiseworthy contribution. (Oops! There goes that Harp again!)

I hope everyone enjoyed Chris's somewhat whimsical comments between numbers as I did.

Walt Disney is not only remembered for 'Mickey Mouse' but for the great variety of entertainment he brought to the world. One of these was a musical by Richard and Robert Sherman called *Mary Poppins*, starring the memorable Julie Andrews and Dick van Dyke. Out of more than a dozen songs from this musical, Chris played half of them in a well-arranged selection. They were *A Spoonful of Sugar*, *Jolly Holiday*, *Feed the Birds*, *Chim Chim Cheree*, *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* and *Let's Go Fly a Kite*. And so we 'flew' off to partake of coffee and biscuits and other things.

Let us put in here a **big thanks** to all those who work out of the limelight - refreshments, ushering, lighting, recording, ticket-selling, which all contribute to the smooth running of our concerts, and not to forget those further out of the limelight - organisers, editors and hosts. Forgive me if I have inadvertently forgotten anybody. Thanks to you too.

After the raffle Chris gets back to his task of giving us good entertainment. The next is a favourite of mine because it reminds me of piano accordion days - *Czardis*, by Monti. It's always a grand pleaser, I feel. Following that comes a bright and breezy run through of *Goody, Goody*. What about those fast runs!

One of the interesting sides to *Twilight Nocturne* was that the

composer, Ronald Curtis, died and left the piece incomplete. Joyce Aldred took it upon herself to finish it by inserting a bright centre. Chris's challenge to identify the addition was not hard because of the styling.

Being a Sunday it was fitting that Chris chose to play us the popular hymn *In the Garden*. ("I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses")

My Old Flame. -I think the next line goes, "I can't remember his name." I have the same trouble. I can't remember the composer's name.

Ice skating? I frequented the arcadiums. Did I skate to *Mr Sandman*? In any case it seemed that Chris attempted to. Did I hear

shades of Phil Kelsall?

Walking in the Air is an English composition. It is a beautiful melody and apparently was made popular by an English organist named Elenora. Chris brought out some of the magnificent solo voices this organ is capable of producing.

After hearing *Nessun Dorma* or *None Shall Sleep Tonight* I think that may well be the case. Congratulations Chris. It seemed difficult to me.

Oh Johnny takes us back to the war years when this tune was played by Joe Loss and his orchestra. So many of us know the chorus of songs but not the verse, so thanks for that, Chris.

Chris thanked those who had

helped him in his preparation for this concert. The closing number in a way was dedicated to Australia Day. It is called *Southern Cross Waltz* by *Corthorn*. It wasn't well-known to me but nevertheless a lovely descriptive waltz in which Chris made full use of the organ.

For his encore Chris selected a medley of *Fine and Dandy*, Leroy Anderson's *The Trumpeter's Lullaby* and as the *Wurlitzer* went to its well-earned rest, *Something's Gotta Give*. It's funny how you can always tell a Leroy Anderson number (like Mozart).

Well, everybody seemed to enjoy the concert. Some thought we could have easily put up with more. However, congratulations to Chris McPhee on an enjoyable and varied concert. Hope to see you again soon.

Salt Lake City's Wurlitzer

In the heart of Salt Lake City is one of today's most unique and fascinating places ... THE ORGAN LOFT!

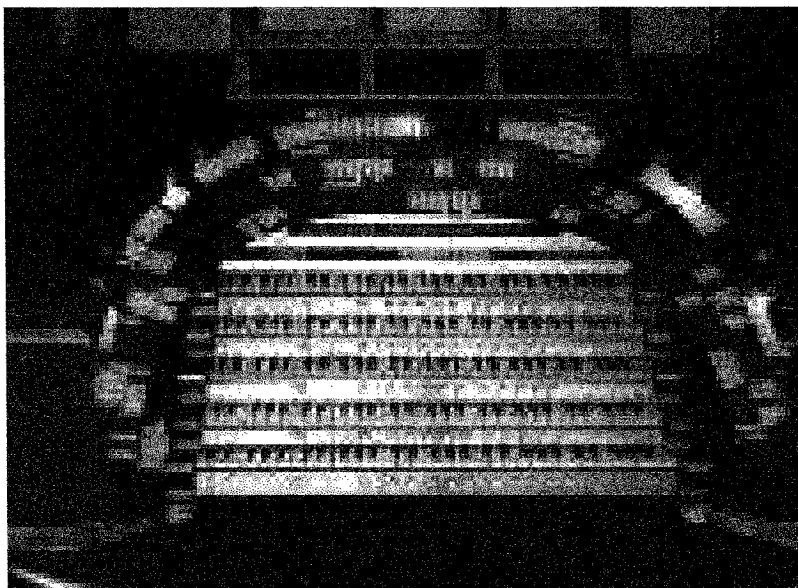
Saturday nights THE ORGAN LOFT is open to the public for dining and dancing to the 34 rank *Wurlitzer* Theatre Pipe Organ, with talented organists performing a wide variety of music from the sounds of Big Bands, Swing and Latin, to favourite popular tunes and old standards.

The Organ Loft features many forms of entertainment, the most notable being the thrilling *Wurlitzer* Theatre Pipe Organ. Dancers and diners have delighted to its music for many years. The talented organists have at their command the music of a large orchestra, complete with exotic percussions such as the marimba, glockenspiel, xylophone, piano, and novelty effects such as bird whistles, car horns, fire sirens, boat and train whistle.

The world-renowned Organ Loft *Wurlitzer* has attracted people from thousands of miles to listen to the lively sounds of the organ, noted as one of the

richest and most exciting ensemble pipe organs in the country.

THE ORGAN LOFT'S *Wurlitzer*



The story of The Organ Loft is the story of the late Lawrence Bray. A story of one man's dedication to the restoration and preservation of the Theatre Pipe Organ.

His passion for pipe organs began as a young man, when he heard and met George Wright and Gaylord Carter performing on the *Wurlitzer* at the San Francisco Fox Theatre.

Intrigued with the sound of the organ, he determined he would search for old theatre organs in Utah. His first acquisition in 1946 was the Utah Theatre's Robert Morton, which he installed in his uncle's chicken coop in Salt Lake City.

Later additions included the organs from Salt Lake City's Gem Theatre and Ogden's Egyptian Theatre. These additions required the continual remodelling and enlargement of the chicken coop until 1956, when he sold the majority of the installation and purchased the 3 manual/19 rank *Wurlitzer* with two consoles from the New York Staten Island Paramount.

Lawrence combined the two consoles to build today's Colossus five keyboard console with 378 stop tabs, which controls today's 2,400 highly unified pipes.

The Organ Loft is the home of a one-of-a-kind historical treasure thanks to the dream of Lawrence Bray, and the continuation of the operation by his nephew, Larry Bray.

A Review of John Giacchi's Latest CD Release

XANADU - John Giacchi at the 5/80 Sanfilippo theatre organ.

Review by John Leeming (UK)

This is a mammoth production in a number of ways. The instrument, with five manuals and 80 carefully-selected ranks, is still (I think) the largest theatre organ on the planet, the artistic presentation of the album is a mini-masterpiece, and the programme is one of the most ambitious I've ever seen on a theatre organ recording.

The selection of music veers a little more towards the popular classical than some, and this in no way diminishes its value as a theatrical presentation, because the artist and instrument work so well together to interpret and develop the music in a way which even the most hardened popster will enjoy!

Large theatre organs are often criticised for being cumbersome and unwieldy of sound, but with an instrument as well-conceived and thoughtfully specified as this, musicians of John's calibre are provided with the scope to bring out the passion of the music with the minimum of compromise. Big does not have to equate with loud, and the palette at his disposal here has given John the opportunity to create what must surely be his best production yet. There is nevertheless a big dynamic range available, which John uses to advantage. This is an album to be savoured in the quietness of your home. In the car or on the train the subtle quieter passages, thus much of the musical interest, will be lost.

The programme opens with Richard Rodgers' oft-performed *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*. Before you cry "Oh, no, not again, let me say that however many times you may have heard it before, John's imaginative arrangement brings a

freshness of variety and excitement to the piece. The dynamics of the organ are complemented by John's musical dynamics, offering movement, menace and mystery in all the appropriate places.

One Fine Day from Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* - this carefully-phrased reading features some beautifully angelic sounds to lead to a dramatic statement of the theme, with a suitably dreamy atmospheric ending, though it may not satisfy the Joan Sutherland purists! Also from the light classical catalogue comes a dark, moody rendition of the *Pilgrims' Chorus* from *Tannhäuser*, a firm but expressive version of Albert Hay Malotte's rich setting of the *23rd Psalm*, and a fine interpretation of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* overture.

There are two extended selections on the album. *Rosalie Remembered* is a medley of contrasting items, starting with a crisp, rhythmic version of *Who Knows?* and ending with a relaxed arrangement of one of Cole Porter's most enduring ballads, *In the Still of the Night*. Included too is the less well-known but nevertheless welcome *I've a Strange New Rhythm in My Heart*. John's dip into the *Wizard of Oz* pulls out the four best tunes from the film, including *Ding Dong the Witch is Dead* and the ever-moving *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

Some of Billy Mayerl's finger-stretching pieces adapt well to the theatre organ, including John's choice here, a lilting lolling *Moorish Idol* from the *Aquarium Suite*, and not a world away from this is Bloom's *Spring Fever*,

featuring the organ's piano with mandolin attachment.

Half way through the programme comes an expressive interpretation of Kern's *Waltz in Swingtime*, with cascades of liquid Tibia and interesting contrasts in tempo, followed by a diverting little interlude with a Latin feel in the form of the curiously titled *Marahuana*.

The CD ends gently with *Cuddle Up a Little Closer*, slightly in the Crawford vein, an implicit invitation, perhaps, to cuddle close to your speakers and listen to the whole thing again. Actually, I wouldn't recommend that. I wouldn't even suggest listening to the entire CD even the first time. Be selective, and savour the organ and John's detailed and careful orchestration in his arrangements. Spread out your listening, then sample it again a few days later - you will, I suspect, enjoy it even more this way.

The recording, by Robert Ridgeway and Jim Stemke, does full technical and musical justice to the Sanfilippo instrument and the room, giving a clarity not always easy to capture in a large organ. The graphic presentation of the CD is exemplary, including a full-colour booklet, with beautiful photographs of John, both at the magnificent console and at peace in the woods.

Don't miss it!

For more reviews see the John Giacchi web site:

<<http://www.users.bigpond.com/johngiacchi>>

Our Next Artist : **JOHN GIACCHI**

With Special Guests, Singing Stars *Sussane Towers* and *Peter Avery*
Sunday, 17th March, at 2pm *Marrickville Town Hall*

At 32 years of age, John Giacchi is considered to be one of Australia's finest exponents of the theatre pipe organ.

In 1990, John was the first Australian to have been awarded a place in the American Theatre Organ Society's Young Organists Competition in that year.

From then on, John's musical career has continued to grow. In 1990 his first commercial recording was released entitled "*Nightmoods*" followed by continual performances at all major theatre organ venues across Australia.

His regular appearances at the Theatre Organ Society of Australia Conventions in Sydney in 1991, 1996 and 2000, Adelaide in 1998 and Melbourne in 1999 confirm his rise amongst the ranks, joining the handful of young artists world-wide destined to take

the theatre organ art-form well into this century.

In March 1999, he completed his first major United States' tour playing 10 concerts in a 5-week period to promote the release of his second commercial recording, "*Beyond the Blue Horizon*". He returned to Australia to commence and complete his latest commercial recording entitled: "*Journey Into Melody*" released in April 2000.

He completed a further US tour at major installations in the United States in September/October 2000 and left shortly after his performance at the Kelvin Grove *Christie* at the Brisbane 2001 TOSA Convention/Festival to play at the prestigious "*Pipe Organ Extravaganza 5*" at the beautiful Rialto Theatre, Joliet, Illinois, in addition to completing

another round of concerts and the completion of his 4th commercial CD recording, *Xanadu*, on the 5/80 Sanfilippo theatre organ, which garnered rave reviews (Reviewed by Brian Pearson in *TOSA News* August, 2001, and by John Leeming on page 12 of this issue). John completed a further highly successful US tour in September/October 2001, and has plans to tour there again later this year.

John recently performed the inaugural recital in Ballarat for the "*Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields Festival*" on the 3 manual 9 rank *Compton* in Her Majesty's Theatre. The success of this performance has resulted in an invitation to perform once again at the festival in 2002.

John's musical commitments continue to be juggled with a career as a lawyer.

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This invitation is for them:*

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If you have never been to a TOSA Theatre Organ Concert before, here is your chance to hear one of Australia's leading theatre organists, *John Giacchi*, from Melbourne.

The time: 2pm on Sunday 17th March. The place: Marrickville Town Hall

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This invitation will not be accepted to gain entry at the door of the concert.*

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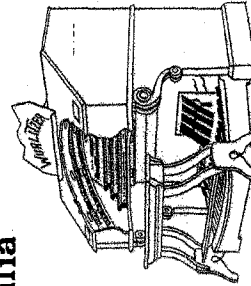
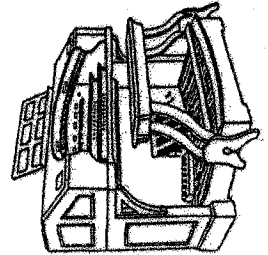
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