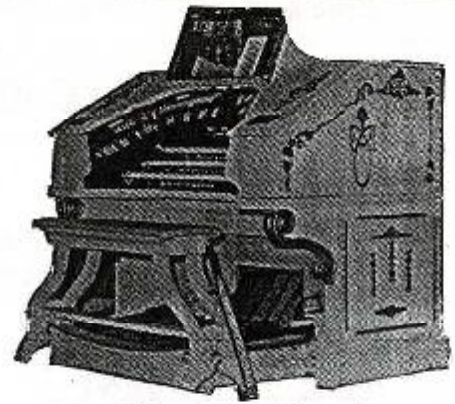




Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

OCTOBER 1989

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DON'T MISS
21st BIRTHDAY PARTY
of Marrickville Wurlitzer



WITH IAN DAVIES AT THE CONSOLE

SUNDAY 29th. OCTOBER at 2.00 PM.

Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville Road, MARRICKVILLE.

Volume 28
Issue 10
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Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or editor.



CALENDAR

OCTOBER

Tuesday	3		<u>Nominations close</u> for election of Office Bearers.
Monday	9	7.30pm	COMMITTEE MEETING
Sunday	29	2.00pm	SPECIAL FREE TOSA 21st BIRTHDAY PARTY CONCERT WITH IAN DAVIES at MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL Marrickville Road, MARRICKVILLE

NOVEMBER

Monday	6	7.30pm	COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday	14	7.30pm	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at ORION CENTRE Beamish Street, CAMPSIE.

DECEMBER

Sunday	3	2.00pm	TONY FENELON IN CONCERT at Orion Centre WurliTzer ORION CENTRE Beamish Street, CAMPSIE.
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DON'T FORGET TO TUNE IN
TO 2CBA-FM EVERY MONDAY NIGHT at 9.00pm.
for

THEATRE ORGAN HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. THEATRE ORGANS

T.O.S.A. committee member Nick Lang was recently overseas and has written part 1 of a 3 part series about the organs he encountered there.

In late June this year I left Australia to spend 5 weeks in the U.S. On this holiday I was able to pursue two of my favourite hobbies, namely Theatre Organs and Vintage Cars. I also did a lot of sightseeing in that time, but for this series of articles I shall stick to the Theatre Organ activities!

Upon arriving in San Francisco (after a non-stop flight from Sydney) I was met at the airport by my hosts for this portion of the trip, Jim & Janice Riggs. We loaded my luggage into the car and raced off to the Castro Theatre in Castro Street where Jim was due to play the Organ Solo prior to the movie. After taking a seat in the front row of the Balcony my "jet lagged" mind was brought back to life by the Sonic Impact that only a large Theatre Organ can make! The responsiveness of the audience was excellent, which I'm sure encouraged Jim to give a top performance. It also showed me how much better Jim's performances have become. (You should hear his latest recording!) More about this organ later..

The next afternoon we went to the Oakland Paramount Theatre. Perhaps the best word to sum up the PARAMOUNT is "atmosphere". From the enthusiasm of the staff (whether paid or volunteer) to the meticulous restoration of the Building (Probably the Best Art-Deco Theatre in the U.S.) to their nostalgic yet exciting presentations, the Paramount is living proof that with a positive, intelligent and above all Professional approach, the BEST traditions of the MOVIE PALACE can be kept ALIVE! Now to the Organ.....

The Theatre opened in 1931 with a 4 manual 20 rank "Publix One" Wurlitzer which was removed in the 1960's. The Theatre remained "organless" until about 1979 when installation of the new organ started. This

4/27 Wurlitzer is made up of 2 organs donated to the theatre in 1975.

The specification and chamber layout of the organ was directed by James Roseveare who was the house organist until his death in December 1988.

After giving me a guided tour of the Theatre, Jim Riggs brought the console up and demonstrated the organ's lush yet articulate sound and showed me some of its unique features such as a VIBRAPHONE where the dampers and motor speed (which determines the amount of time each note resonates) are adjustable from the console via two small levers on a scale. Another unusual feature of this organ is the second (or "slave") console. This console consists of 4 manuals with combination pistons, a pedal-board and a music rack. The "pistons"(presets) on this console are duplicates of those on the main console. This set-up allows some exciting organ duet possibilities. Yes indeed, the PARAMOUNT Organ and the Beautiful theatre that surrounds it is a mecca for Theatre Organ enthusiasts.

A few days later Jim, Janice and I went sightseeing with their good friend Steve Levin. Steve has been involved with Theatres for many years and is an authority on them. He has in storage a very rare "2½" manual Wurlitzer. Some of the early (pre 1920) Wurlitzer consoles had 2 x 61 note standard manuals and 1 x 37 note manual (keyboard) which was in a central position above the second manual. I suspect that these short manuals only played xylophones & glockenspiels etc. IF anyone knows more could they please tell me.

On our way back home we stopped at Ye Olde Pizza Joynt in San Lorenzo for a pizza. The "Joynt" opened in 1958 and was the first organ-equipped pizzeria, featuring the then 2/9 Wurlitzer. Unlike many similar set-ups, the "Joynt" is still doing a roaring trade. (Their pizza is said to be the best in the Bay Area!) The building is a very practical size and is expertly managed by the Henningsen family who have owned and operated it since 1958. The organ

is installed at the farthest end of the building with the console about 10 metres away on a side wall. Numerous percussions line the walls and ceiling with an extra 16ft Tibia octave at the farthest end. With all the 16ft ranks on, the resultant bass shakes everything! You have to experience it to believe it; the sound goes right through you! Resident organist Jerry Nagano has a 3 manual console and 14 ranks of small-scale WurliTzer pipework to work with. The sound of the organ is bright but by no means deafening. I really enjoyed Jerry's playing and the pizza was excellent.

On the morning of my final day in San Francisco Jim and I drove to the CASTRO Theatre. Ray & Doris Taylor had very kindly made the organ available that day and they met us at the front door and showed me the organ chambers etc. The

CASTRO opened in 1922 and presently seats 1600. The original organ in this theatre was a 2/11 ROBERT MORTON (removed in 1961). The current instrument is made up of components from about 8 different organs. The specification of the 4 manual console is laid out for 26 ranks and about 21 of those ranks are installed and playing. Every component in this organ is original WurliTzer (including relays) which is a little unusual for a composite instrument in the U.S. This organ is regarded as one of the top 5 instruments in the U.S. by virtue of its voicing, regulation, specification, winding and impeccable workmanship. It has an excellent dynamic range which is enhanced by a theatre with good acoustics. The organ can be well heard anywhere in the theatre. Some of the 16ft offset ranks are installed on the back wall of the stage, supplying a surprisingly strong bass when called for. This is an organ which definitely deserves it's reputation.

This concludes Part 1.

Part 2 will be about the 1989 A.T.O.S. Convention in Detroit.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

At the committee meetings held in August and September, the following persons were accepted as members of the Society.

We extend to them a warm welcome and hope they will enjoy our activities and concerts, as well as their time with us.

Mr. & Mrs. J.Venables, Frank Johnson, Mrs. Gwen Binkins, George Risbridger, Andrew Grahame, Peter Englert, Cecelia Paddy, Jim Waters, John & Carol Atkins, John MacKenzie, Ronald Shelley, William & Gai Tougher, Ian Robinson, Violet McKay and Harry Richardson also Eric Frendin.

SECOND OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Kevin Rowlands has been appointed an Official Photographer for T.O.S.A. in addition to Barry Tooker. Thanks Kevin!

EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS FOR MAINTENANCE AT MARRICKVILLE

Mr Ian Tulloch offered to assist with the maintenance of the Marrickville Organ, and Neil Palmer advises this member has been extremely helpful. Ian also apparently finds the maintenance quite interesting. It provides him with an insight as to what happens when he practices on the Organ. In addition Neil finds that when maintenance has to be done on the chests, an extra pair of hands is invaluable.

On behalf of Committee and all Members, thanks Ian for your help which is much appreciated.

CONCERT REVIEW John van Kleef concert (September TOSA NEWS)

Following the publication of this review by Peter Held, the Secretary, and several members of Committee received some very 'strong' complaints by telephone. It should be stressed however, that the views expressed in the review are those of this reviewer, whilst others have stated they enjoyed the concert. Although most of the items were very short, so were the announcements & a lot of organ playing was heard during the afternoon.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor,
TOSA NEWS

Dear Sir,

It is not often that we are prompted to write to your journal, however on the issue that we are about to address we believe that it is important to place our comments on paper and in print in the magazine.

We refer to the review, written by Peter Held and published in Sept. TOSA NEWS, of the recent John Van Kleeff concert. Although we were not able to attend his concert the reports we had were of a concert of a high standard and in keeping with John's previous performance. You can imagine our dismay and disgust to then read the verbal diatribe unleashed upon John by Peter Held.

Let us now make some comment upon the review. Firstly who has appointed Peter Held as judge, jury and in this case executioner, as far as musical taste and arrangement is concerned. If John Van Kleeff cares to use his own arrangements and / or registrations then what gives Peter Held the right to vocalise in such a caustic and vitriolic manner. John's selection of numbers to include in his performance is also not Peter Held's province to determine.

To criticise a fellow artist by use of the comparison with oneself is surely the height of bad taste and self indulgence and in so doing Peter Held has, we feel, exposed his whole review as being on the theme of "This artist is not as good as me". For the editor of TOSA NEWS to have fallen for this

ploy, indeed for the editor to have published this review at all is amazing. In our opinion the pages of this newsletter ought to be used to promote the society and it's music not for the self promotion of the ego of Peter Held or any other reviewer.

A further point well worth noting is that organists of the calibre of John Van Kleeff are hard enough to find, we ought to be a little more encouraging and a lot less eager to admonish, just because their playing is not exactly to one's liking.

The last point about the review is the Peter Held "Olde English" (or is it Irish) in which the review is written. The prolific use of inverted commas, quotation marks and capital letters is reminiscent of the language of a bygone era and is exactly what one would expect from the self proclaimed greatest organist, teacher, reviewer etc. etc. of all time.

To Peter Held we say, what a despicable example of jealousy and wrath you have unleashed on this fine young organist. To TOSA we would suggest that at least an apology ought to be forthcoming to John and please never again allow this person to contribute to the magazine.

To John Van Kleeff we offer our sympathy and support. That you should have been publicly criticised in this manner is shameful, please do not consider that the opinions of one arrogant egotist are representative of all your Sydney friends and supporters.

Pam and Bob McMinn

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - Continued.

Dear Editor,

I noticed your plea for articles giving hints in playing the Theatre Organ, and I would be pleased to help.

Since I have retired and moved away from Sydney, I no longer teach, but I do have the experience of teaching many people - especially senior students - and I believe that the problems I have found are quite common. My pages of hints would try to overcome these problems.

Attached is the first article, please ask your readers to write and tell me if this article helps and if more articles would be appreciated.

JOHN MARTIN

ORGAN TUTORIAL NUMBER 1

By JOHN MARTIN

The biggest worry for most of my senior age students is that their fingers may not be fast enough for them ever to be really good. One of my first endeavours is to show them that pieces played at breakneck speed with frantically fast fingers do not always sound musically pleasant.

It is worthwhile to set up a tape recorder and play a piece which you already have on a commercial recording - preferably one by George Wright. When you play back both pieces, pay particular attention to the speed, you will probably find you are trying to play too fast. Many famous organists do actually play their pieces at a very sedate speed, and this allows them to provide those embellishments which add so much interest to their recordings.

Because the organ has such a wider range of sound and can accommodate a wide variety of styles, you can use many features of the organ to enhance your playing. The whole point of playing the organ is that you can give free reign to your feelings and make each piece uniquely your own, by using your own particular style.

The main points to aim for are; a variety of sounds with judiciously chosen stop changes; clean, accurate playing; attention to phrasing; and interesting chording.

The stop changes - will of course depend on the style of piece and the sounds available on the organ you are playing. If you are at the keyboard of a real Theatre Organ for the first time, take a few minutes to investigate the sounds already set up on the pre-sets. These will almost certainly have been well chosen by experts and should save you hours of trying out the various combinations. Later when you are familiar with the pre-sets you can experiment by adding other stops and ranks of pipes one or two at a time to find the sound which you feel is right for the music you are playing.

Accurate playing will come only by constant practice, but many students find that making a commitment to practice the scales at least twice before they start on their actual music is very beneficial. Try playing the scale of C major both hands AND WITH PEDALS a few times. It will improve your left-hand and foot co-ordination.

Attention to phrasing is a much overlooked point. Phrasing is very much akin to breathing. A singer could not sing a complete song without pausing for breath. Playing a piece of music without phrasing actually makes your audience anxious as they would for a singer who looks as if they may expire because they forgot to breathe.

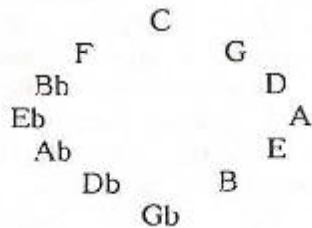
Interesting chording is something which unfortunately rarely comes along overnight. With care, most pieces can be enhanced, but you must know quite a lot of theory to assist - or else you need a pair of golden ears.

To develop your listening skills, try playing the chord of C major - C, E, and G. Note how this chord is quite static. It is complete in itself. Now add B flat to the chord. This new chord which is often shown

(Continued Page 8)

Organ Tutorial No.1 - Continued

on chord sheets as C7 has a distinct sound which needs to be 'resolved'. Now play the chord of F major - F, A, and C. Note how this new chord sounds 'correct' as the one which follows C7. As every major seventh chord has a chord to which it resolves, these are often put down in a special form, known as the CIRCLE OF CHORDS



In this circle every major seventh chord resolves into the major chord next to it in an anti-clockwise direction.

Modern music relies heavily on the chords shown here, and you can often use chords from this circle to replace ones which seem too bland. For instance say your music calls for the following sequence of chords:-

C: F: D: C:

Refer to the circle of chords, note that the circle moves from D to C via the chord of G so TRY the following changes to the chords in the music.

C: F: D7: G7: C:

The process of adding and substituting chords calls for at least one tutorial on its own, so I will prepare one, and wait to see if you want me to submit it for printing in TOSA NEWS -- Happy playing --

John Martin

T.O.S.A.'s 21 YEARS AT MARRICKVILLE

On Sunday 29th October, T.O.S.A. will celebrate 21 years of WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ concerts in Marrickville Town Hall. It is appropriate that Ian Davies, our Patron and dedicated supporter, who has done so much for the Society over the past 28 years, should play this special Concert. It was Ian who played the first Concert on this Organ 21 years ago.

Here however, we will concentrate on the history of the Organ and the society's involvement.

For the first eight years of T.O.S.A.'s existence, events consisted of early morning Concerts at the Capitol Theatre - before the picture shows commenced, and an occasional gala event at Sydney's Theatre Beautiful - the Prince Edward Theatre, plus some Concerts at the 4 manual 21 rank State Theatre WurliTzer. This era was the heyday of the elaborate home electronic Organ, so many concerts were held in other venues featuring the latest offerings from the many famous manufacturers.

The Society is dedicated to the preservation of the Theatre Organ and of course the Society always hoped one day to have an Organ of its own which could be carefully restored and used on a regular basis for Concerts, Cabarets and even practice sessions.

In 1965 it was announced that the Prince Edward Theatre was to be 're-developed' (conservationists nowadays would probably have prevented this happening) and the Organ was for sale. As T.O.S.A. had previously expressed interest in the unit, they were given a fair chance to bid and with the grand sum of one thousand pounds (\$2,000) the Organ was secured. A team removed the Organ and stored it, while the search was made for a suitable venue. Marrickville Town Hall was chosen and the Council modified part of the stage area to allow space for the two pipe chambers.

A great many volunteers assembled in the lower ground floor area with fingers decidedly sticky from all that glue, while we re-covered all of the primary and secondary motors which were badly affected by grime and pollution - and years of wear - in its original location.

Finally the ten ranks of pipes were in place and the Console was placed in its elaborate frame to protect it while not in use. Prior to this many aspects of Console storage had been investigated and there had been some hope that a hydraulic

(Continued page 9)

T.O.S.A's 21 years at Marrickville

(Continued)

hoist could be used to store the Organ under the stage area, though cost precluded such an idea.

The initial euphoria gradually gave way to some unease when it was found that Organ and Piano duets were not possible and Singers were reluctant to perform with the Organ. This was because the Prince Edward Organ along with two others also destined for Australia (one now in Perth, the other in the Melbourne Plaza) were specially ordered with a non-standard pitch of $C = 537.5$ whereas Normal pitch these days is $C = 523.25$. Why these Organs were ordered at the high pitch is still a mystery.

Much time was spent investigating how the Organ could be re-tuned. Flue pipes - Tibias, Diapasons, Strings and Flutes were relatively easy to re-tune, but the reeds were troublesome and the re-tuned percussions were a major problem. However in 1982 the Capitol Organ became available and the decision was made to borrow the bars from the Chrysoglott, Xylophone, and Organ Harp until that Organ was overhauled and a home made for it. This was done and George Stevens, the noted Adelaide Organ builder started the massive job of re-tuning the Organ to standard pitch. One or two pipes were completely replaced whilst several others were only just able to be re-tuned. The lower notes of the Kinura and Tuba caused the most headaches. However the job was done. The Vox humana pipes were found to be in need of a great deal of work and so a replacement set was purchased from the U.S.A. and duly installed.

During the past ten years the strings were thought to be somewhat lacking and an extra string rank was added. Once the Orion Project was under way of course, the borrowed percussion bars had to be returned to their correct Organ and Neil Palmer - who has been maintaining the Organ for the past eight years - had the unenviable job of grinding the metal Glockenspeil bars and re-tuning the other bars to suit. This took many nights of hard work with a tuner and a grinding wheel as tools.

The tone of the Organ was improved for a while by replacing the rather unstable and squeaky Kinura with the Krumet from the Capitol Organ and perhaps one day a decision may be made to purchase another Krumet rank for permanent installation on the Organ. By the way do not think that replacing ranks and changing specifications is heresy. Most Theatre Organs undergo such changes periodically - especially when their homes are changed. In fact if ever funds are available it may be worthwhile to replace the two manual console with a three manual one to make it more attractive to the players. Such a change would have to be undertaken along with the conversion of the unit from the present clumsy electro-mechanical relay system to the very versatile Computerised system as used at the Orion Centre.

What of the future? Even as this article is being written, decisions are being made by the Marrickville Municipal Council regarding the fate of the Marrickville Town Hall. The Hall has largely outlived its purpose and is severely under-used for most of the year. It is probable that contractors will re-develop the hall for use as a wedding reception centre. In this case access to the Organ will be severely restricted and we have been assured by the Council that they will assist us to re-locate the Organ to a more suitable venue if this happens.

No attempt has been made to list the numerous Artists who have played for the Society over the years as that subject was recently covered in detail by long standing member Frank Ellis who is writing an update which will appear in TOSA NEWS shortly.

Colin Tringham

**SYDNEY MOVIE THEATRE
REMOVES WURLITZER**

The 3 manual, 8 rank WurliTzer organ installed in the MFCCA Theatre at Kogarah has recently been dismantled and removed to storage by Sydney organ builder John Parker.

(Continued page 10)

Sydney Movie Theatre removes WurliTzer

(Continued)

The WurliTzer, OPUS No.2222 was built in 1938 for the "flagship" theatre of the English UNION CINEMAS chain - the Ritz, Richmond. Designed by Union's musical director Harold Ramsay, the Ritz organ was one of the typical English 'small' WurliTzer organs.

Although small, their power was great and these instruments were usually given to having more "extensions" of ranks than some of their larger counterparts. Luxuries such as Vibraphones replaced the usual Chrysoglott and Tibias were given at pitches from 16' - 2'. Something never seen in American WurliTzer 3 manual organs of 8 ranks.

Philip Doyle, Managing Director of MECCA Theatres is sad to see the WurliTzer that he imported into Australia in 1977 leave the theatre. It was installed for the then resident organist Margaret Hall, who at the age of 13 commenced playing a Conn electronic at the MECCA Theatres at both Kogarah and Hurstville. On completion of the WurliTzer's installation in 1978 by George & John Stephens of Adelaide, Margaret Hall at age 14 continued as resident organist at the WurliTzer till 1981.

The organ was featured at the "Notable Ninth" Convention held in Sydney in 1980 and played by Margaret Hall, where it was enthusiastically received. In 1981 & 1982 organ builder John Parker was contracted by MECCA Theatres to tonally 'louden' the organ due to acoustic problems created by a new lowered ceiling and acoustic panelling, fitted for "theatre sound". A free concert was presented by MECCA Theatres on completion of this work and over 700 people attended in August 1982.

Margaret Hall left MECCA Theatres in 1981 to travel to New Zealand. Her place at the console was taken by New Zealander Chris Crist who continued as resident organist till 1986. Well known Sydney organist Alan Tranter followed Chris and performed regularly till 1988 when the organ fell into disuse.

1989 saw the organ used only twice: Margaret Hall returned to spend a morning playing her "former charge" for a prospective purchaser and well known music personality Ian McLean from Canberra visited the theatre to play the organ for 20 minutes a few days later.

Sydney organist John Giacchi was given two minutes at the console before the final "shut down". It was in tune - it all worked - it was sad!

The "Knights of Gladness Waltz" was the last item the organ played in the MECCA. Such was the rush to get the organ out before the contractors arrived "We'll Meet Again - Don't Know Where, Don't Know When" was not even thought of!

The organ has had to go to make way for the MECCA's conversion to a four cinema complex. Such is the local competition, Philip Doyle has had little choice. He does however say that there will still be organ music at the MECCA! An electronic instrument will be installed in one of the four MECCA CINEMA CITY's theatrettes - all of which are to be interior designed on different themes.

MECCA MOVIE CITY is due to open in January 1990.

STOP PRESS

The MECCA WurliTzer has been purchased by Alan Tranter, owner of the 4/19 WurliTzer from the Melbourne Regent and the 2/7 Christie, formerly from the Victory (later MECCA) Kogarah. Information received implies that the ex MECCA WurliTzer may have a home in a suburban theatre, due for reconstruction.

DON'T FORGET THOSE NOMINATIONS

Don't forget to nominate NOW as we need old and new faces on Committee for 1990.

Nomination forms were included with Sept. TOSA NEWS & nominations close with Returning Officer 3/10/89.