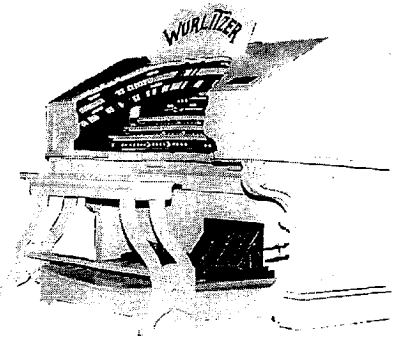


OCTOBER, 1998

TOSA NEWS



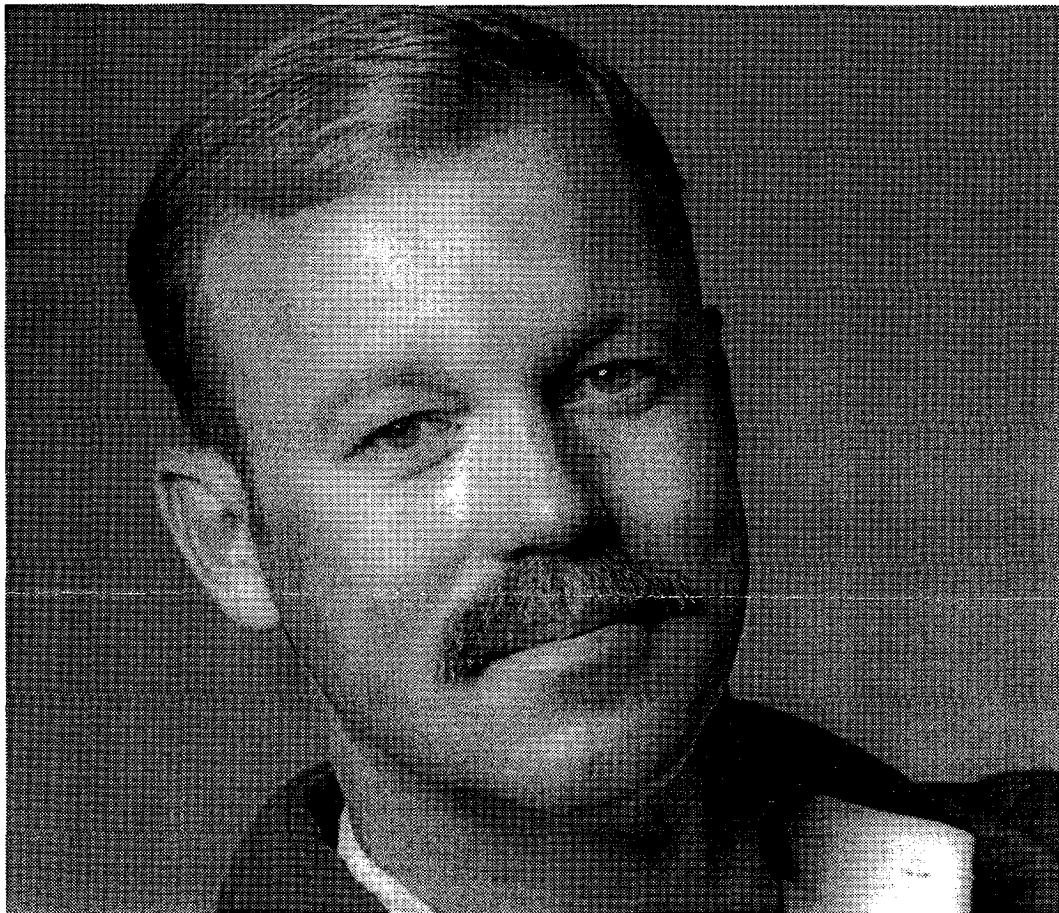
2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

Sydney's Only Resident Theatre Organist

From the *Hayden Orpheum Cremorne*

NEIL JENSEN



Sunday 1st November at 2pm
Marrickville Town Hall
with Security Parking

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Issue 9
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TOSA NEWS

OCTOBER, 1998

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - **EDITOR**

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COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

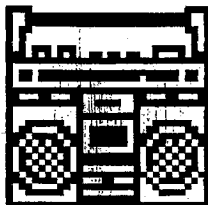
Friday 2 at 5.00pm Close of Nominations
for Committee
Monday 12 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 25 at 2.15pm Selwyn Theatre
Home Party
(See page 5)

NOVEMBER

Sunday 1 at 2.00pm Neil Jensen Concert
with Helen Zerefos
Marrickville Town Hall
Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting
Sunday 15 at 2.00pm Annual General Meeting
Service City Mechanical Museum
338 Botany Road, Alexandria
(Come at 1.30pm to hear the
Mechanical Music Machines)
(See page 9)

DECEMBER

Sunday 6 at 2.00pm Tony Fenelon and
John Atwell's
Duo Christmas Concert
Orion Centre Campsie
Monday 7 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting



REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO
2CBA FM - 103.2

EVERY MONDAY AT 9.00 pm
For "Theatre Organ Highlights"
Presented by Chris Styles

From The President

You'll find more than one reference to the coming **Annual General Meeting** in this issue of *TOSA News*. So please, can we count (literally) on your support on 15th November? It's a new idea to have it on a Sunday afternoon, and it's at a new place! We think you will find lots of advantages, and we should have much less problem getting a quorum together. Three of the **AGM** reports will be published in advance in this magazine instead of being read out. This is to stream-line the meeting without taking out the interest or your opportunity to have a say. See you there!

If you, or a person you have co-opted, is interested in standing for the **TOSA** committee, please act now. Nominations close 2nd October. The nomination form was in the September *TOSA News*. Remember, all positions are declared vacant at this time each year.

I'm always intrigued by the way bits and pieces can be swapped around among Theatre Organ people ... I have even heard stories, out of the dim past, of pipes going missing in the dead of night - I guess that's why there are so many locks and keys at **Campsie** and **Marrickville**. (Of course, **USA** have been a constant source of ranks of pipes over the years.) But this month **TOSA (NSW)** was able to help **TOSA Ballarat** with ex-**Marrickville** "KA switches that used to operate the organ couplers" and help **Perth** with the ex-**Orion** "piston setter board". These were of no possible further use to us, so it was a pleasure to donate them for the cost of transport.

We were recently offered a new **Yamaha Disclaviar Piano** at a greatly



reduced price. It's a lovely instrument and it would have gone well with the organ at **Marrickville** which already has a "Piano" tab. But even at the low, never-again-at-this-price of \$12,000, we decided we couldn't afford it at the moment. Unless someone would care to buy it for us? Or maybe someone knows of a pre-loved one. No, sorry, a "**Pianola**" won't do.

Hey ... it was great that 36 new people came to the last **Orion** concert. Thank you to the members who brought them along using the free ticket offer. Have you put the hard ward on them to join **TOSA**?

Regarding the proposed week-day **Members' Playing Afternoons** at the **Orion**, I would like to thank all those people who let me know they were interested. We are working on the project, but have been asked to leave the **Orion** free for the next month or two while the new computer is installed. Yes it could be happening at last! So, early next year - **Orion**, here we come!

Yes - I'll say it again - I enjoyed the last concert. **Ray Thornley** really had the audience on side! Will **John Giacchi** put on a good show? Yes, I reckon he'll do it again.

Till next time ...

Walter Pearce

Editorial

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel the second of the two additional **Members' Playing Nights** at **Marrickville Town Hall** announced last month, as the hall was otherwise engaged. The Thursday, 22nd October date is therefore cancelled - please remove the date from your diary. However, happily, there will still be a **Marrickville Members' Playing Night** on Thursday, 24th September, at 7.30pm. See you there!

Don't forget committee nominations close 2nd October, and the **AGM** is on 15th November at 1.30 (for 2pm).

Most people these days submit items to me that are already typed up, and that is a great, time-saving help to me. Just one request, though, - please don't use highlighting or italics in your copy as my scanner goes beserk, refuses to recognise the print and I have to re-type these sections! Thank you to all those who supply all the interesting items for **TOSA News**.

Best Wishes,
Colin Groves

Welcome To New Members

TOSA (NSW) is happy to welcome the following new members and to wish them a long and entertaining stay with us :

Ronald Ansell - Belrose
Stanley Brown - Charmhaven
Corrie Carruthers - Hurstville
Joyce Erickson - Wentworthville
Jan & Jim Mathews - Kellyville
Marie & John McGrath - Bathurst
Brian Thompson - Earlwood

Proposal of Resolution from member, **Peter Held**, for consideration at the **AGM** on Sunday, 15th November, 1998 :

"I propose that Clause 14 of rule 14, which presently read : 'A nomination of a candidate for election under this rule is not valid if that candidate has been nominated for election to another office at the same election', be re-worded to read, 'A candidate for election may be nominated for one only of the office-bearing positions of the association, and, also, as an ordinary member of the committee of the association at the same election.'"

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



From The MAILBOX

Heath Wooster from Melbourne
writes about his recent travels :

4th August, 1998

Dear Committee and Members of
T.O.S.A. (NSW Division),

I was thrilled to win the **Senior Division** of the **American Theatre Organ Society's Young Theatre Organist Competition**. Thank you for your congratulations and encouragement, also the cheque for \$200 was greatly appreciated.

It was a very busy convention in **San Francisco**, with many wonderful organs and a week of concerts. The opportunity to perform on the **Berkeley 4/33 Wurlitzer** was a thrilling experience for me.

We were able to travel by car with **Jim and Shirley Clausen** via the **Naper Valley, Redwood areas, Rogue River Gorge, Crater Lake** and the **California Coastline**, on route to **Portland**. We then travelled to **Phoenix** to see and play the newly opened **Organ Stop Pizza Restaurant Organ**. 117 degrees - HOT!!!!

I was also privileged to attend the **Hopeful Hearts Benefit Concert "Concert For Life 98"** - hearing **Lyn Larsen** and **Australia's own Tony Fenelon** on the **5/ 80+ Theatre Organ** installed in the **Sanfilippo Music Salon** near **Chicago**, then returning to **L.A.**, visiting **Universal Studios**, before flying home to **Melbourne**. In all, a wonderful educational and memorable month.

I have now returned to **Swinburne University Melbourne**, to continue my studies in the area of Business, majoring in Marketing. (A lot of work to catch up on especially assignments!) Thank you again for your support and encouragement over the years.

Heath Wooster
Resident Organist
Dendy Cinema Brighton

Joy Geraedts of Caringbah
writes about **Ray Thornley's**
concert :

24th August, 1998

I write this still on "cloudnine" from yesterday's wonderful! wonderful! concert of **Ray Thornley's**.

No wonder no-one wanted him to end his concert - it was a magis time!

So, come on you mwmbers who don't regularly patronise our concerts, not only is it inexpensive entertainment, but you are missing out on a fabulous way to enjoy your Sunday afternoons and also show our appreciation to the very hard-working committee of **TOSA (Sydney)**.

Once again, thank you for these wonderful Sundays.

With appreciation,
(Mrs) **J.A.Geraedts**

Bettine Vallance of Burwood
contributes her regular poetic
item :

Ken Double
at the **Wonderful Wurlitzer**

It was a great performance right from the start,

His vibrant personality and sincere approach came from the heart.

We could tell his love of music - it was obvious to all,

And his choice of numbers, especially from **New Moon**, were filled with the sounds from the **Wurlitzer** to enthrall

He was a wonderful presenter in every way,

His playing gave to us a melodious day.

A word about new member, Ken Martin :

In the hey-day years of the theatre organ the capital cities had a number of fine instruments in daily use. Most were to be found in Sydney where the work of tuning and maintenance was carried out by the eminent firm of **Noad and Son** led by **Mr Ken Martin**. The area served regularly extended from **Gordon** to **Kogarah, Hurstville, Parramatta** embracing **Chatswood**, the **Prince Edward, Regent, Kings Cross** and included **Christies, Wurlitzers** or whatever as well as numerous and remote church instruments and the **Grand Organ** in the **Sydney Town Hall**. His experience can only be described as vast.

TOSA extends to **Ken Martin** a special welcome.

As a graduate musician and music teacher he has spent recent years as Music Master at **Danebank College, Hurstville** where instruction extended to a specialist bell-ringing choir whilst continuing to maintain numerous historic organs as master organ builder. That catalogue includes the **3/36** at **St Brigid's Marrickville**, the **Rose Bay Kincoppal organ, St Patrick's Church Hill**, and the **Garrison Church**. Whenever the famous **Italian** organist, former University Professor, **Maestro Sergio di Pierri** visits **Sydney** he specifies that the organ be prepared by **Mr Martin**.

Driven by demandd clients' dissatisfaction with the work of others, he now favours organ maintenance over music instruction.

Distinguished in the field of electronics, he has constructed much equipment including one of his three computers and keeps up-to-the-minute using **MIDI** sequencing and recording on **Mackintosh** or **IBM**. He is able to print music directly as he composes. Accompanying choirs or soloists, he may be heard occasionally playing the **Grand Organ** in the **Sydney Town Hall**.

Advertising in TOSA News

For members:

Small, organ-related
advertisement = FREE

Just quote membership no.

For non-members :

Full page = \$80

Half page = \$40

Quarter page = \$20

Small bubble = \$10

FOR SALE

LOWREY Citation Theatre
Organ GAKH 11.25

2 Full Keyboards; Leslie Speakers

2 Octave Pedalboard

Beautiful Instrument

Perfect Condition - Just Serviced

Price : \$3,500.00 o.n.o.

Please ring after 6pm

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You are invited to a
TOSA HOME PARTY!!!

Hear talented theatre organ artists on the
Thomas Celebrity Organ
and on piano

Sunday, 25th October, at 2.15pm

Hosted by **Ritchie Willis** and **Norm Read** at the

Selwyn Theatre

13 Rosemont Ave, Mortdale

(between Mortdale and Penshurst Stations)

Admission : \$8 for men ; \$6 + a plate for ladies

Limited Seating!! Book Early!!

Booking Essential on 9580 3581

Proceeds to the TOSA Building Fund

Players include : **Wendy Hambly, John Shaw,**
Joy Ericksson and David Devenport

The History of the *Capri Theatre's* 4/29 Theatre Pipe Organ.

The centre-piece of the 1998 *Adelaide National Convention* was undoubtedly the fabulous *Capri Theatre's* Pipe Organ. Here are the latest specifications and an outline of the organ's history, adapted from the *Convention's* program booklet :

Main Chamber (LHS)

Rank	Manufacturer
Diapason	Wurlitzer
Flute	Wurlitzer
Flute Celeste	Wurlitzer
Gamba	Christie
Gamba Celeste	Wurlitzer
Musette	Trivo
Salicional	Christie
Salicional Celeste	Wurlitzer
Tibia Clausa	Dodd
Trumpet	Trivo
Tuba Horn	Wurlitzer
VDO	Wurlitzer
VDO Celeste	Wurlitzer
Vox Humana	Christie
Chrysoglott	Wurlitzer
Toy Counter	Wurlitzer

Solo Chamber (RHS)

Clarinet	Christie
English Horn	Trivo
Harmonic Tuba	Wurlitzer
Horn Diapason	J.B.Meyer & Sons
Kinura	Wurlitzer
Lieblich Flute	Wangerin
Oboe Horn	Unknown
Orchestral Oboe	Trivo
Quintadena	Stephens
Saxophone	Trivo
String	Morton
String Celeste	Morton
Tibia Clausa	Wurlitzer
Vox Humana	Wurlitzer
Chimes	Wurlitzer
Glockenspiel	Wurlitzer
Piano	Kimball
Sleigh Bells	Wurlitzer
Xylophone	Wurlitzer

Rear of Stage

Diaph. Diapason	Wurlitzer
Tibia Clausa	Kimball
Marimba Harp	Wurlitzer

In December 1923 **Wurlitzer Opus 748** was installed in the **Wintergarden Theatre** in **Brisbane**. This organ was known as a **Model 195** and was a two manual, seven rank instrument. It consisted of a *Tuba Horn, Open Diapason, Clarinet, Viol d'Orchestra (VDO), Viol Celeste, Flute* and *Vox Humana*, plus tonal percussions and traps. A special feature was the inclusion of a facility by which the organ could be operated from player rolls.

In 1940 the organ was removed to the **Plaza Theatre, Sydney**. In the mid-1950s it was bought by **Penn Hughes**, then living in **Sydney**. From around this time another nine ranks of pipes were added to the original seven. By 1956 **Penn Hughes** had installed the instrument in two chambers at the rear of his home. The two manual console was inadequate for the number of ranks, and in 1962 **Penn** acquired the four manual slave console from the remodelled **State Theatre, Melbourne**.

About five years later the instrument was bought by **Mr and Mrs Mike Pfitzner** of **Darwin**, who loaded the organ into a double-decker bus and drove it to their home. However, the ravages of **Darwin's** tropical climate and other factors combined to prevent the **Pfitzners** from ever installing the organ as they had hoped.

In 1974 **Mike** accepted an offer from **TOSA (SA)** to purchase the organ for \$6,600. The organ was dismantled again by a group of **South Australian TOSA** members and was removed to **Adelaide** a short time before Cyclone Tracy destroyed **Darwin** on Christmas Day, 1974.

Since acquiring the instrument **TOSA** members have spent thousands of hours in restoring the organ, purchasing the **Capri Theatre** for its home, installing and opening the organ and developing the theatre and the organ to their present excellent condition.

Significant milestones in the history of the instrument have occurred in subsequent years. After eight years of intense restoration work at **Spicer Memorial Church** the organ was installed at the **Capri** in time for its opening at the **1983 TOSA National Convention**. The provision of glass-fronted chambers allows patrons to see the inside of the instrument and provides a unique and exciting sight.

As funds permitted and expertise became available, the organ underwent significant improvements over the next few years. In 1986 the stage was built in front of the screen. At this time the console pit was incorporated into the design. For the first time in **Adelaide**, a theatre pipe organ could rise to stage level from below in the traditional manner. In March 1987 the **August Forster** grand piano was purchased with funds raised by the Ladies' Auxiliary. Although not a part of the organ, it has been used extensively in organ and piano presentations ever since.

In 1988 it was decided to upgrade the switching system of the organ. In early 1989 the mammoth task of rewiring the instrument began. A small and talented team of **TOSA** members rewired the organ in ten busy weeks, installing the state-of-the-art **Devtronix Multi Action Computer System**. The re-opening concert on 14th May 1989 with **Tony Fenelon** was a resounding success. The reliability and versatility provided by the **Devtronix** system in operating the organ is now widely recognised.

TOSA now had a newly wired, more versatile instrument in an excellent setting. The time was right to seek professional help in tonally finishing the organ and deciding upon the final rank specification for the future. During 1991 we were fortunate to secure the services of the famed organist **Walter Strony** and **Ed Zollman** of **Colorado Pipe Organ Service**. These artisans recommended the final specification of 30 ranks of pipes. **George Stephens Organ Builder Pty Ltd** installed four of the new ranks - *Orchestral Oboe, Musette, Post Horn* and *Tibia*. The organ maintenance team installed a replacement *Chrysoglott*, acquired from the **Ballarat Division** of **TOSA**.

During their return trip in November and December 1995, **Walter Strony** and **Ed Zollman** completed the task of tonally finishing the completed organ, now with a newly designed specification and console layout. During the finishing process **Walter** and **Ed** decided to extend the *Main Tibia Clausa* bass using some pipes from another rank, thereby ending up with 29 ranks. **Walter** played the first concert on the finished organ on December 12th, 1995. Subsequently he recorded a CD on the organ, **Walt Strony in Australia**.

Tributes to George Wright

The Legendary Theatre Organist

This George Wright obituary appeared in the June 8-14 issue of "Variety" magazine, the International Entertainment Weekly and was handed to Neil Palmer by member Greg Ellis:

George Wright, a renowned organist who served as staff organist at **Radio City Music Hall** and the **Paramount Theater** in **New York** and was perhaps the most recorded theater organist of all time, died May 10 of unreported causes in **Southern California**. He was 77.

Wright was born in **Orland, California**, and reared in **Stockton, Calif.**, where he took organ lessons. His first professional engagement was at the **Shanghai Terrace Bowl**, a Chinese night club in **Oakland** that boasted a two-manual, six-rank **Wurlitzer**. The show was broadcast nightly from an **Oakland** radio station.

In 1941, Wright joined **San Francisco** radio station **KFRC** and also performed at **San Francisco's Fox Theater** on Saturday nights. In 1944 he relocated to **New York City**, where he played on **Jack Berch's** NBC show and later guested with **Paul Whiteman** and **Percy Faith**, and on the popular network shows of **Bing Crosby** and **Perry Como**.

He also conducted his own orchestra on the **Robert Q. Lewis** show and began a seven year stint playing in a trio with **Charles Magnante** and **Tony Mottola** for an NBC show sponsored by the **Prudential Insurance Company**. Wright realized a lifelong dream in 1949 when he signed on as chief organist for the famed **Paramount Theater** in **New York**.

In 1951 he returned to **California** as ABC's musical director for the West Coast. He also served as organist and choir master for the **Redemptionist Church** in **Whittier**. He recorded more than 40 long-playing albums and nearly 20 compact discs.

Another obituary, from the Sacramento Bee :

George Wright, 78, was theater organist

By **Steve Gibson**, *Bee* Staff Writer
(Published May 17, 1998)

George Wright, an internationally known theater organist who got his start in the 1930s while a student at **Grant High School** in **Sacramento**, has died at age 78.

Over the years, **Mr. Wright** performed in theaters up and down the East and West coasts, recorded on four record labels and was organist for the television soap opera **General Hospital** and other radio and television shows.

He died last Sunday of heart failure in a **Los Angeles** hospital.

He played a key role in reviving interest in theater organ music, according to **Bob Suffel**, a friend. "He was known for his very inventive arrangements and lightning fast 'stop changes'," **Suffel** said. **Mr. Wright** never married and had no children. For decades he lived in **Hollywood**, where he kept a large pipe organ in his home.

Donn Linton of the **Los Angeles Theater Organ Society** said **Mr. Wright's** home organ "was assembled from various sets of pipes he picked up over the years. He was always swapping pipes, changing it around."

Mr. Wright was born in **Orland, Glenn County**, the son of **Lulu** and **John Wright**, and was reared there and in **Sacramento**, according to **Suffel**. "George graduated from **Grant** in 1938, and helped install their theater organ, which still is operating," **Suffel** said. "He lived in **Hollywood** most of his life."

He performed at the **Paramount Theater** in **Oakland**, the **Paramount Theater** in **New York City**, the **Fox Theater** in **San Francisco** and the **Rialto Theater** in **South Pasadena**, **Suffel** said.

Mr. Wright's organ recordings were distributed on the **Banda, HiFi, SOLO** and **DOT** labels. "During his lifetime he made sixty-plus recordings," said another friend, **Ken Petersen**. "He continued to (play at

concerts) and make recordings right to the end. The good news is that many unreleased tapes have been found.... So **George** will continue to entertain us with his musical wizardry for some time to come."

Mr. Wright's remains were cremated. No services were held.

US organist John Ledwon placed the following tribute from Terry Cutshall, president of the BANDA recording company, on the Internet:

George Wright
August 18, 1920 - May 10, 1998.

George Wright died peacefully on May 10, 1998, of congestive heart failure, just a few months after recording his last album, "**Salon**". **George** was generally recognized as the finest theatre organist ever.

This musical genius left a legacy of 60 years of performance, as well as some 60 published recordings starting in the early 1950's. Some of those recordings sold more than a million copies.

Although the world knows **George** from his music, my own loss is a personal one — **George** and I were best friends. He was an exceptionally spirited and generous man who brought joy and lots of laughter into my life. I worked with him professionally for many years, and I was fortunate to be his agent and producer.

The happy part of this announcement is that although **George** is gone, you haven't heard the last of his music - by far! **George** mastered many wonderful recordings that were never released - not only theatre organ, but classical organ, piano and even spoken interviews. **George** himself engineered some of them. As soon as it's feasible, **BANDA** will begin the substantial project of issuing these performances on CD. These new releases will keep **George** and his music alive within us for many years to come.

Terry Cutshall
BANDA

From *US organist,*
Dan Bellomy :

I feel like I must say a few things regarding the passing of "The Living Legend" — or maybe now just "The Legend", — **George Wright**.

I think back to the night I won the door prize at the local **Hammond Organ Society** when I was 9 years old. It was a copy of an album called "**The Wright Touch**" by **George Wright**. I took the album home and played it several times straight through before turning off the stereo. I was mesmerized by that sound — the sound of a wonderfully done theatre pipe organ with an absolute master at the console. It was my first exposure to Theatre Organ (TO) and I personally believe it to have been the major factor in my choosing the theatre organ as my ultimate form of musical expression.

Through these years I have managed to meet **George**, make friends with him, argue musical points with him, and consistently be inspired by him. Although not close in the past few years, **George** was my friend and my mentor. Every time I spoke to him, I hung up and went straight to the organ — something in the conversation had sparked a new musical point.

George was a true original. Yes, he loved and made use of many "tricks" of the late **Jesse Crawford** — BUT, he never failed to make the musical presentation all his own before it was over with. He made you feel the emotion of the music. He used whatever instrument he was playing at the time to convey every last tear-filled ballad, every last joy-filled novelty tune, every last ounce of excitement of that **Broadway** show medley — HIS way — a "way" which was just another example of his love for the music and the instrument.

Just like most theatre organ artists of my generation, I went through my period of wanting to play note-for-note **George Wright** arrangements — and I didn't do a bad job of it, or so he told me one time in my hometown **Hammond** dealership. Years after that, he also told me that he was very proud of the fact that I had managed to discover my own style and use for the instrument rather than relying on another's inventiveness. THAT was a turning point, for me and my music — again through the courtesy of **George Wright**.

George was continually a musical inspiration in many, many ways and his recordings will allow him to continue that inspiration for not only myself but all other people who choose to open their minds and ears to this wonderful instrument that **George** introduced to so many. I would like to think that many of my present-day colleagues would be willing to also admit that their own music is probably better for the fact that they had the opportunity to listen to and know **George**. So many people in general seem to not be willing to admit what is so obviously true when you hear them play.

I am proud to say that I loved the man's music and that it had its lasting effect on my own work. I, along with many of my colleagues, will continue to use those registrations that are so very familiar to TO folks — and one of these days we will ALL be able to thank **George** for allowing us to borrow bits and pieces of his genius to incorporate into our own style.

I owe **George** so very much — for his inspiration, friendship and belief in my own worth as a musician. As he said in an out-take, "The session is over, let's go home." **George** is home. He is at peace. He knows we are all thinking about him today — I just know it. He's probably also enjoying a libation of some sort with **Jesse Crawford** and **Eddie Dunstedter** and that thought makes me smile!

We shall forever remember you **George**, we shall forever be thankful for your enrichment of our lives, musically and personally.

Dan Bellomy

From another *US organist*
Scott Foppiano :

It is because of the consummate musicianship of **George Wright** (and others like **Tom Hazleton** and **Virgil Fox**) that I am an organist today. Needless to say - **George** did not affect my classical organ playing to any degree but, when I was in the 7th and 8th grade, I got hold of my very first **Organ Literature Foundation** catalogues and ordered all the **George Wright** I could. I loved those records then and still love them now even though I've played them almost to the point of sheer unplayability.

I even remember when "**The Living Legend** plays the **Chicago Theatre**

Organ" came out in a deluxe direct-to-disc package - I was in 9th grade and bought it at a little record shop in a mall in **Hattiesburg, Mississippi**, while on a business trip with my dad. Upon the first hearing, I was hooked on theatre organ even more. Thank goodness for CDs that can now perpetuate these magnificent recordings!

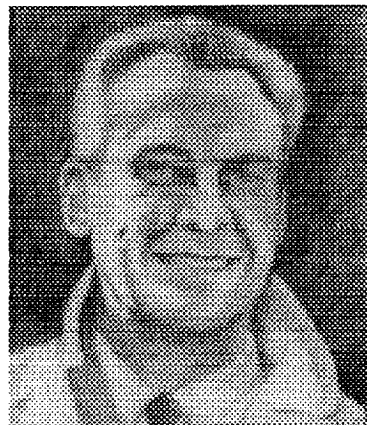
About that same time I attended a performance of the **Memphis Oratorio Society** and the **Memphis Symphony** doing "**The Messiah**" by **Handel** at the **Orpheum** in downtown **Memphis**. Walking down that centre aisle for the first time was also my first time seeing a movie palace, and what a grand one to see - an original 1928 **Rapp and Rapp** French Baroque house. Spectacular! Then, before hand the white **Wurlitzer** console rose out of the orchestra pit and I was hooked! I found the manager somehow and conned my way in the next morning to try this wonderful organ. That was all it took.

Through recordings and study I learned the theatre pipe organ and much of its music and have never been sorry since. I have heard **Lyn Larsen**, **Tom Hazleton**, **Lew Williams** and countless others tell these fascinating stories of **George**, his mannerisms, personality, musicianship and even other little details of his intriguing and endearing personality.

George Wright - thank you for sharing such an immense talent with the world and for providing such a high level of superb musicianship and encouragement to artists like myself and countless others. Rest in peace.

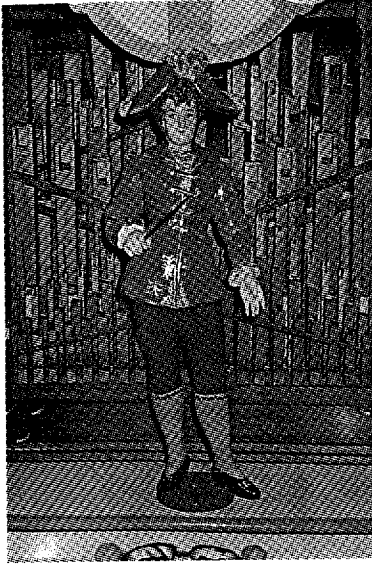
Scott Foppiano

PS - I have no doubt that, when **George** entered Heaven, the first thing he heard were **Tibia Clausas** with perfectly regulated tremas that had been adjusted to within an inch of their lives!!!!



Business AND Pleasure at the A.G.M.!!!

The **Annual General Meeting** of T.O.S.A. is set for Sunday, 15th November at 2pm. The very different venue for this year's meeting is the **Restoration Showroom of Antique Mechanical Music** at the "Service City" factory complex 338 Botany Road, Alexandria.



This unique collection represents entertainment, technology and craftsmanship of a by-gone era. You'll marvel at the sight and sounds of these vintage, **European** musical creations which include examples of fairground, dance hall, and hand-cranked street organs. Many of these large instruments have ornately carved facades, often with animated bell-ringing figures, all richly painted for maximum visual impact, and the music they play could be considered the "happiest music on earth."

Other fascinating exhibits include the *Showman's Steam Engine*, the *Robot Orchestra* and the *Violano Virtuoso* - a mechanically operated violin duo with piano accompaniment. Restoration currently focuses on an *English Galloping Horse Ride* (i.e. *Merry-go-round*). Fingers are crossed for it to be in operation for our visit!

TOSA members **Margaret Hall** and her husband, **Robert Nelson** normally operate guided tours of the collection for group bookings and have kindly negotiated with the owner to make the venue available to **TOSA** for the **AGM**.

Members are advised to arrive by 1.30pm when a half hour demonstration of the instruments will be presented prior to the commencement of the meeting, scheduled for 2pm. Following the meeting at approximately 3pm, there will be more entertainment, including **Margaret** at the **Rodgers Century Theatre Organ**, and of course the customary afternoon tea. Members are asked to bring a plate of food to share. Tea and coffee will be provided.

There is limited parking in the complex, however street parking on **Botany Road** will serve the overflow. Alternatively, the **309** and **310** bus from the city stops almost opposite **Service City** at the first stop south of **Bourke Street**.

So come along to this year's **TOSA AGM** for an informative afternoon regarding the society's



activities and enjoy the nostalgic splendour of this wonderful collection. Enquiries and further information - ring **Margaret Hall-Nelson** on **(02) 9584 2353**.



A Report on TOSA's *IAN DAVIES'* CONCERT at the BONDI JUNCTION-WAVERLEY RSL

Saturday , 8th August, 1998

by Barry Tooker

It was a lousy weekend weather-wise, prompting **Ian Davies** to comment that it reminded him of the terrible storms he experienced during naval service in the **North Atlantic**. Consequently the audience numbers were down slightly. However the afternoon's entertainment more than made up for braving the elements.

Ian introduced popular artist, **Bill Schumacher**, to open the concert. A **Cole Porter** composition, *Just One Of Those Things*, was a good opening number and **Bill** followed this up with a selection from the pen of **Jerome Kern**. This bracket included such popular tunes as *A Touch Of Your Hand*, *Yesterday, They Didn't Believe Me* and *Long Ago And Far Away*. *Lullaby Of Birdland* from **Dave Brubeck** followed and **Bill** finished off with *Till There Was You*, from *The Music Man*.

Ian thinks that all **Wendy's** are lovely and **Wendy Hambly** needs no introduction to the **Bondi Junction Rodgers**. She is always requested for these concerts. Her signature tune *The Best Things In Life Are Free* was a good opener. To follow this up she took us on a journey along "The Yellow Brick Road" with **Dorothy, Toto, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion and Tin Man**. Of course, this was a selection from *The Wizard Of Oz*, and some of the tunes included were *We're Off To See The Wizard*, *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* and *Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead*. Staying in the 1930's **Wendy** continued with a song she found in an old **Judy Garland** song-book - a lovely rendition of *A Little Bit Independent*. In good theatre organ practise she finished off with the *Bocacio March*.

It was now time to hear **Ian** and of course he had to tell a short story before playing. Two drinkers in a bar observed a man race in and ask the barman for a double whisky which he downed in one gulp, then

after a moment he walked to the end of the room, up the wall, across the ceiling, down the opposite wall and back to the bar. Putting the glass down, he left the bar. When one of the two drinkers regained his composure he remarked that that was strange. "Yes," replied the barman, "he usually drinks beer!"

Leaving us to digest that, **Ian** proceeded to play a **Tin Pan Alley** selection. These included those old favourites, *There's No Business Like Show Business*, *My Guy, I've Got To Travel On* and *Hey Good Lookin'*. *The Lament Of The Cherokee Indians* led us into a short intermission. Time to visit the comfort station and recharge our glasses.

After interval **Ian** warmed us up with a couple of jokes before reintroducing **Bill Schumacher** back on stage. *Oklahoma* is one of **Bill's** favourite musicals and from this he played the title tune, *Kansas City*, *The Farmer And The Cowman*, *People Will Say We're In Love*, *I Can't Say No*, and *The Surrey With The Fringe On Top*. This year is the centenary of **George Gershwin's** birth and in honour of this great composer, **Bill** played four of his more popular tunes. They were *Embraceable You*, *By Strauss*, *Someone To Watch Over Me*, and *Lady Be Good*.

It was now time for **Wendy** to return to the console. After a bouncy *Come*

Follow The Band, she played selections from *Beauty And The Beast*. *It's Great To Be In Love Again* was followed with her final number for the afternoon, *Don't Give Up The Ship*. **Wendy** has a gentle, expressive style which is always good to listen to.

Ian returned to demonstrate the **Rodgers** in Grand Organ style with *Hymn Of Joy*. Earlier in the week, while **Ian** was practising, he heard a beautiful voice accompanying his music and when he tuned around he discovered the club's assistant secretary manager singing. Guess who is to join the club choir. That old classic organ solo *In A Chinese Temple Garden* included some untremmed organ and chimes. A bracket of tunes which included *Roll 'Em Girls Roll 'Em*, *Jubilation T Cornpone*, *Turkey In The Straw*, *I Like Mountain Music*, and *She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain* followed.

Bill took his seat at the grand piano with **Ian** on the organ for a singalong. Everyone was in fine voice for such old favourites as *I Want A Girl Just Like The Girl That Married Dear Old Dad*, *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*, *Mammy*, and *Glory Glory Hallelujah*.

To finish the afternoon, **Ian** thanked the audience and artists and **Mary** presented **Wendy** with a small gift. On behalf of **TOSA**, **Bill** thanked **Ian** and the Club, and presented a small gift to **Wendy** and also to **Mary Davies** for being a long-suffering, organ widow. As a special request for **Pearl Lawson**, **Ian** played *Sailor*, then finished off with his theme tune, *Cruising Down The River*.

These are good afternoons where members can enjoy good music free, and have a drink in pleasant company. The artists donate their services and we owe a vote of thanks to the Club Management for providing the venue and services at no charge. Thank you one and all.



Mary and Ian Davies, Bill Schumacher and Wendy Hambly

The Re-Commissioning of the 1866 William Hill & Son Organ in St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney on Sunday, 21st June, 1998

TOSA member, Stephen Bosanquet, was present at the opening service and has written the following report, and donated to our archives a copy of the opening service booklet and another source of information, "The Organs and Organists of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney" by Mark A. Quarmby.

The re-commissioning was performed as part of a service at 2.30pm on 21st June, conducted by the Dean, the Very Reverend **Boak Jobbins**, with the participation of the choir and the choirboys.

A large crowd, including church organists from other churches, had gathered and the ceremonies started with a peal of bells. During the service the hymns were accompanied by the organ allowing it to be heard for the first time. Towards the end of the service **Michael Deasey**, the Cathedral organist, played a short recital, with the assistant organist, Mark Quarmby, playing a second half.

The restored organ is in the southern transept of the Cathedral and looks really stunning with its coloured pipes. It is reputed to have cost nearly \$1,000,000 to restore.

At present there are 2 other organs in the Cathedral which may not be used in the future. These are :

1. The **Kinloch** organ, built about 1845, and donated to the Cathedral by St Paul's Anglican Church, **Rose Bay**, in 1992. It was originally installed in St Andrew's Scots Church which was located behind St Andrew's Cathedral.

2. The **John W. Whiteley** organ built in 1922. This organ was intended for the Town Hall in **Guildford, Surrey** in the UK but was not installed there. It was sold on to St Andrew's Cathedral and shipped out in 1929. It was opened by the organist and master of choristers, **Thomas Beckett**, on Sunday, 12th October, 1930, and dedicated in April 1932, a day after the Harbour Bridge opened.

The History of the William Hill & Son Organ (Opus 1182)

Built in 1866 under the supervision of **Dr E.G. Monk**, the organist of York Minster, and dedicated in 1868, the same year that the Cathedral was consecrated, it was the first **Hill & Son** organ in NSW. **Montague Younger**, the first organist at St Andrew's, was chairman of the organ committee established to choose the organ for Sydney Town Hall. **Edmund Blacket** took a great interest in the organs bought for the churches he designed and drew a design for the organ's case upon which **Hill & Son** based the organ's final appearance. With its 3 manuals and 37

stops it was the largest organ in the state.

In 1899 this organ was modernised and enlarged by the firm of **William Davidson**, with the action between the manuals and the pipes being changed from mechanical to tubular-pneumatic, and the addition of 4 stops and tremulants. By the mid 1920's, the **Hill** organ was becoming unreliable and was considered too small for the building, and this led to the purchase of the **Whiteley** organ.

The **Whiteley** organ also became unreliable and the **Hill** organ began to be used again. By 1948 only part of the **Whiteley** organ was playable and in 1949 organist and master of choristers, **Hugh Bancroft**, received a quote from **Hill, Norman and Beard** (which ceased to operate on 30th June, 1998 - Ed.) to rebuild and combine the **Hill** and the **Whiteley** organs. The quote was accepted and work was completed in 1952.

The two organs were connected with

electro-magnetic action to a new, 4 manual console, located some distance away behind the choir, resulting in an annoying sound delay for the organist. The "double" organ now had 77 speaking stops, 22 couplers, 83 ranks and almost 4,700 pipes.

During the 1980's this combined organ began to fail, with ciphering and unexpected, random stop changes. In 1992 the night before the visit of **Queen Elizabeth II** and the **Duke of Edinburgh** the organ completely failed, causing many hours of frantic work to make the organ playable in time for the nationally-televised service. A report found that both the **Hill** and **Whiteley** organs had a limited life and that urgent work needed to be done.

Tenders were called from several organ-builders around the world and in **Australia**. After considering their impressive workmanship, the committee chose **Orgues Létourneau** of **Québec, Canada**, to do a complete restoration and enlargement of the **Hill** instrument.

The Hill/Létourneau organ (1998)

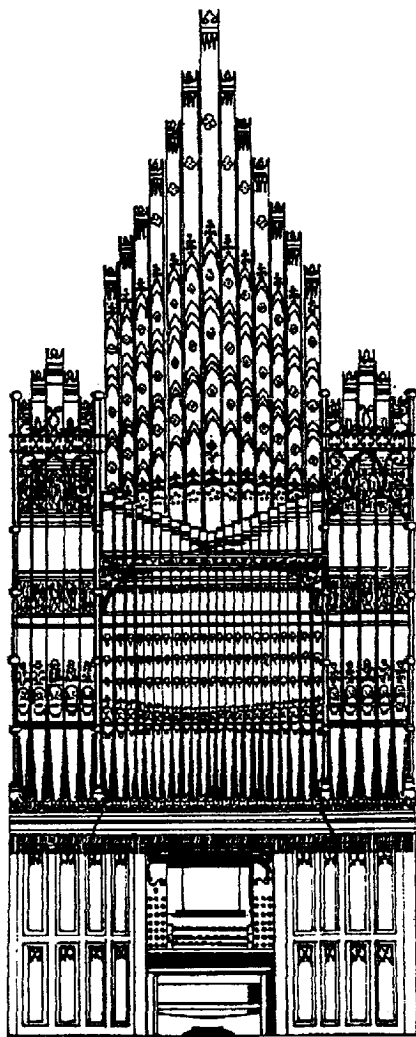
After the last recital on the combined organ, given by **Michael Deasey** on 10th October, 1996, the **Hill** organ was removed from the southern transept during that October and shipped to **Canada**. The organ arrived back in April, 1998, and was dedicated and opened on Sunday, 21st June, as reported above.

Exact replicas of the top 13 highly-coloured facade pipes were made in **Germany**, as the original 16' **Hill** pipes had gone to **Bendigo Cathedral** with the **Whiteley** console when the combined organ was created. More than 70% of the original **Hill** pipework has been re-instated with new stops added to counter the inadequacies of the original instrument.

Action - mechanical; **Coupling** - electric, except for mechanical to the Great; **Stops** - 53; **Ranks** - 63; **Manuals** - 4 + pedals; **Pipes** - 3, 570.

(An interesting detail for theatre organ enthusiasts is that **Stanfield Holliday**, a well-known theatre organist with at least one recording made on the **Melbourne Regent Theatre's WurliTzer**, was the assistant organist at St Andrew's, at one time)

Stephen Bosanquet



A Report on the Ray Thornley Concert

Orion Centre Campsie

by Cliff Bingham

Sunday 23rd August 1998

An encouragingly large audience was present to hear an excellent and varied program of quality theatre organ music from ex-patriot **Sydneysider, Ray Thornley**.

It had been some time since we heard **Ray** and that was at the **Marrickville Wurlitzer**. It was therefore with a degree of anticipation that we awaited **Ray's** concert. We were not disappointed.

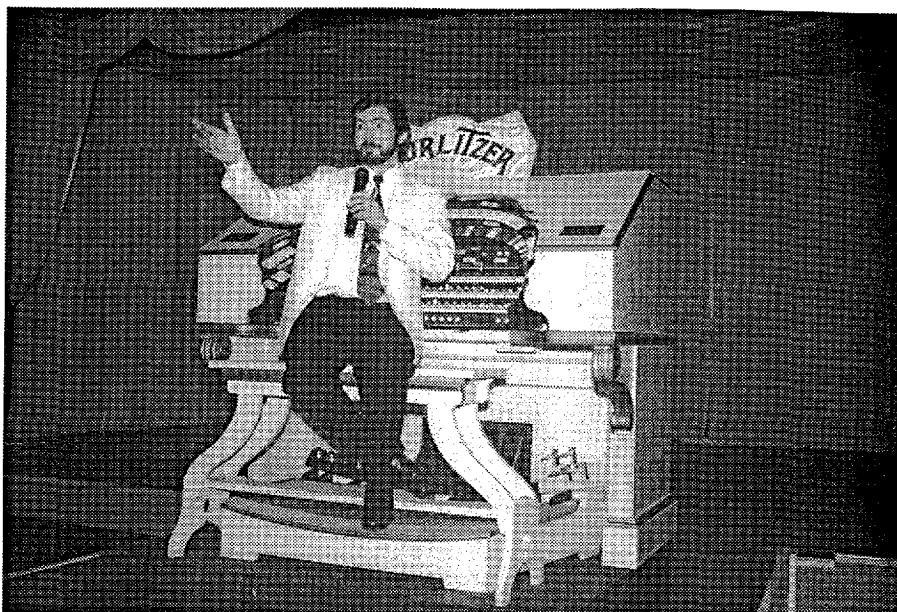
From his console raiser, *With a Song in my Heart*, it was obvious that **Ray** had lost none of the style and technique that has earned him his enviable reputation.

Schubert's stirring *March Militaire* made clever use of left-hand melody with right-hand Piccolo obligato.

A selection of music from *Kismet* was inspired by the distinctly 'Eastern' decor of the recently redecorated **Orion Centre**.

A medley of two unrelated numbers is not always successful. With *Stardust* and *Love is a Many-Splendoured Thing*, however, **Ray** used lots of contrasting tone colours with restrained registrations of Tibias and Strings to 'bring it off'.

Leroy Anderson's *The Typewriter* is a fun (and somewhat demanding) piece, in which **Ray** featured the piano and other tonal percussions. A contrasting *Serenade* by **Schubert** was



played with just the right feeling of romance, again with good use of the organ's softer tonal resources.

A rollicking *Mississippi Mud* was followed by a majestic performance of the *Gold and Silver Waltz* by **Lehar** to conclude the first half.

Following intermission and the raffle-draw (it was a pleasure to have our co-patron, **Councillor John Gorrie** doing the honours), **Ray** opened the second half with a traditional theatre organ treatment of *Begin the Beguine* and followed up with a fine arrangement of the lovely waltz from **Tchaikovsky's** ballet *Sleeping Beauty*.

Like the writer, **Ray** enjoys playing

marches and this was obvious from his rousing treatment of *Under the Double Eagle* which had everyone's toes tapping.

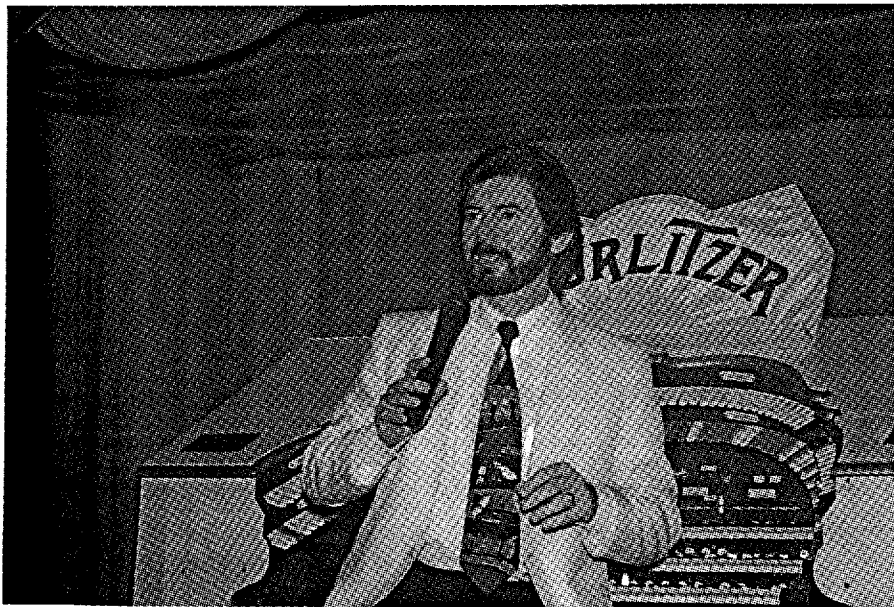
A complete change of mood followed with the *Intermezzo* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* which demonstrated **Ray's** ability to explore the softer sounds of the **Orion Wurlitzer**.

A finger-busting *Cascade of Stars* gave our lighting technician, **Miles Perry**, the opportunity to bathe the stage most effectively with stars. How does he do it!

In a Persian Market was made all the more effective again by the new decor in the **Orion Centre**. The music from the *Merry Widow* has been a favourite of many theatre organists and **Ray's** interpretation of **Lehar's** wonderful music did it full justice.

A rip-roaring *In the Mood* concluded the program or so we thought! Prolonged applause from the audience made sure that **Ray** returned for an encore. *Anchor's Aweigh* is an oldie-but-a-goodie and **Ray** gave it the full theatre organ treatment again with Piccolo obligato in the final chorus.

More applause followed and **Ray** obliged by taking the console down with a reprise of *Under the Double Eagle* to conclude a most entertaining program from one of our finest performers.



OUR NEXT ARTIST : *NEIL JENSEN*

"The most impressive **Australian** import I have seen" - **Television WMGC2, New York, U.S.A.**

"**Jensen** is without doubt, one of the great entertainment artists today" - **The Console Magazine, U.S.A.**

Musician, Promoter, Entrepreneur are but just some of the many hats that **Neil Jensen** wears. Internationally reputed, **Neil Jensen** is unquestionably one of the most exciting and versatile **Australian** keyboard talents to emerge on the popular organ scene in recent times.

This talented young man is not just a musician - he is a showman. A household name in the international circles of popular organ music fans, **Neil Jensen** became known to all **Australians** when he toured **Australia** performing the spine-chilling score he has arranged to accompany the original and definitive screenplay version of the 1920's classic horror - "**The Phantom of the Opera**".

Born in **Brisbane**, **Neil** made his first professional appearance as an organist in the **Brisbane City Hall** in 1973. He first studied classical piano, then turned his creative talents to the organ, becoming especially fascinated with the orchestral pipe organ. In 1983, **Neil Jensen** extensively toured **New Zealand, Canada** and the **United States** where he performed a whirlwind concert tour of more than thirty cities.

To co-incide with the tour, **Neil**

.....
Last year, towards the end of Neil's USA tour, Karl W. Keller, expressed his appreciation on the Internet :

Last evening, 26th October, 1996, **Neil Jensen** presented a concert on the **3/66 Kimball Theatre Organ** at **Dickinson High School in Wilmington, Delaware**, and completely captured his audience with his command of the organ and his style of playing. It is rare at **Dickinson** to honour an artist with a standing ovation but when **Neil** finished his last number the audience rose almost as one and applauded long and loud. It was an **OUTSTANDING** concert and it is my hope that **Neil** will be back in the very near future.

Neil Jensen hails from **Australia** where he studied classical piano before turning to the organ. He is now recognised as one of the world's finest orchestral organists.

The **Dickinson** concert was the last in the **USA** for this season as he is returning to **Australia** on October 28th. For those who heard **Neil** in other venues I know you share my enthusiasm for **Neil's** playing. For those who have not heard him I will only say that you have missed a great experience. Anytime you can attend one of his concerts I recommend you do so.

Karl Keller

Musica est Die donum optimi

released his debut commercial album - "**Neil Jensen Australiawide**". He was invited to return to the **United States** in 1985 and a second album, "**Neil Jensen Concepts**", was released. Today **Neil Jensen** is recognised as one of the 'world's finest orchestral organists'. Since 1983, he has performed seven international concert tours and has produced several albums which are marketed internationally. Future tours and recording releases are now being produced .

In 1987, on his return to **Australia** from his fifth international concert tour which included **England** and **Wales** as well as the **United States**, **Neil** was invited by entrepreneur and television celebrity, **Mike Walsh**, to become resident Musical Director at his **Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace** at **Cremorne**, which **Mike** was in the process of restoring to its original 'Art Deco' opulence. This massive multi million dollar restoration included the installation of an original 1924 '**Mighty WurliTzer Pipe Organ**' which was imported from the **Wilson Theatre** in **Fresno, California**.

Neil's appearances at the **Orpheum** entertain hundreds of thousands of patrons annually. His high public profile has certainly exposed theatre organ music to millions of **Australians**. As well as enjoying **Neil's** cameo performances which precede selected weekly screenings, **Orpheum** audiences have been treated to a 'sell out' series of **Silent Film Classics** to

which **Neil** has skilfully arranged, composed and performed the live accompaniment score.

Neil promotes and produces a yearly Theatre Organ Series at the **Orpheum** - "**The WurliTzer Pipe Organ Pops Series**". Attracting capacity crowds, these shows have featured internationally renowned keyboard celebrities. In addition to solo performances, **Neil Jensen** has performed many appearances with the celebrated orchestra **The New Trocadero Dance Orchestra** - a distinctive 30's styled orchestra. His show "**The Organ, The Dance-Band & Me**" has been a sell-out for every performance. In May 1993, **Neil** was invited by the **The Cinema Organ Society (UK)** to perform as special guest artist for their **40th Anniversary International Theatre Organ Festival** held in **London**.

A gifted 'all round' musician, **Neil Jensen** has an innovative approach to keyboard styling. His knowledge and application of modern hi-tech, computerised techniques combine with his traditional talent producing an individual and stylistic trademark. **Neil Jensen** dares to be different. His knowledge of the mechanical and tonal regulation principles of the Theatre Organ is equally as consummate as his musical prowess.

His interests include the study of **Art Deco** style, fine foods, entertaining and physical fitness.

BOOKING FORM

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Always include a stamped self-addressed envelope with your booking. If this is not done, tickets will be held at the Box Office.

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SUNDAY, 1st NOVEMBER, 1998 at 2.00pm

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Mrs Jean Newell : (02) 9750 0362

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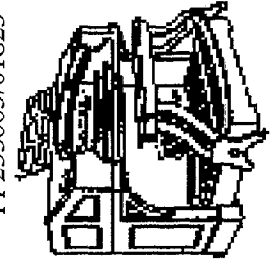
TOSA NEWS

OCTOBER, 1998

Theatre Organ Society of Australia
(NSW Division) Inc.

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