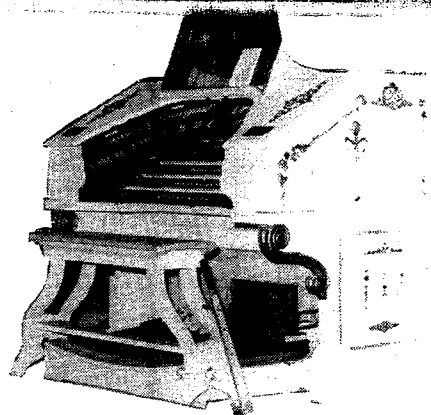


Marrickville Town Hall

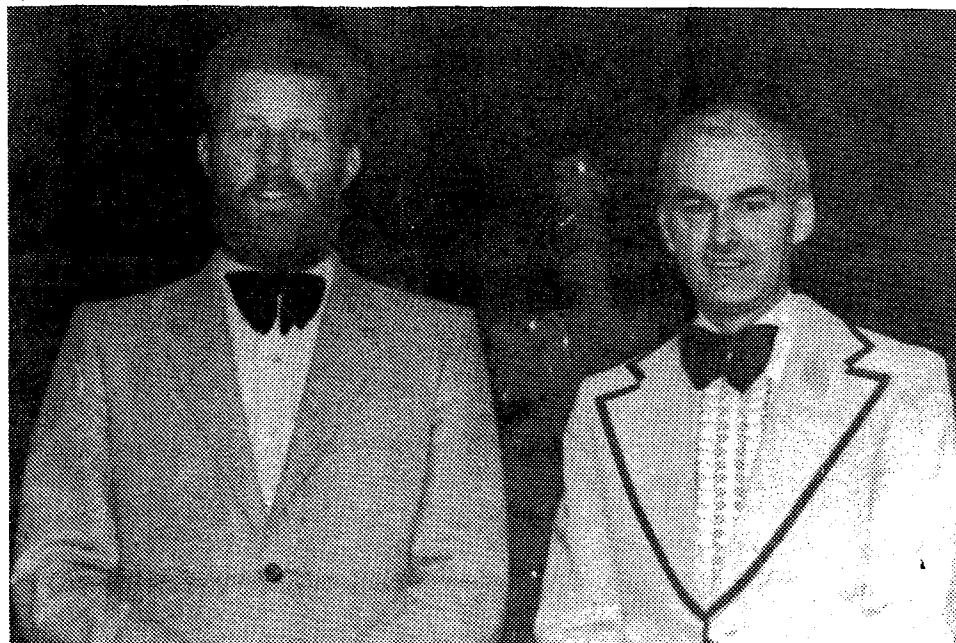


Orion Centre Campsie

JULY 1988

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**"TWO PLUS ONE"**



**JOHN CRAWFORD and CLIFF BINGHAM  
TOGETHER AGAIN IN CONCERT**

**with associate artist  
vocalist  
BRONWYN HALL**

**AN AFTERNOON OF MUSIC AND SONG  
ORION CENTRE CAMPSIE  
SUNDAY 31st. JULY at 2.00pm.**

VOLUME 27  
ISSUE 7  
PRICE \$1.00

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The Secretary, T.O.S.A. (N.S.W. Division) Inc.  
Box 474 P.O. Sutherland N.S.W. 2232.**WHAT IS THE POINT OF A REVIEW ?**

by John Rattray

Members will have noticed over the past few months a regular column from Ian McLean. Two or three members have responded rather vehemently, saying that they do not want Mr McLean to have the right to have his articles published in the magazine. TOSA NEWS is more than just a journal for the members of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (N.S.W. Division) Inc. It is an international magazine and goes to all points of the compass. Since the demise of KEYBOARD WORLD and its regular Theatre Organ News section, Ian's articles have been appearing in our journal. It is an established principal that the Editor of any newspaper or magazine has the right to print or deny any article for publication. That is why in the front of TOSA NEWS we have the disclaimer such as we do.

Some people have written to the society demanding that these articles be not published. However, in doing so they have asked that their name and address be not published!

Personally, I do not always agree with Ian McLean, but I will always defend his right of free speech, as a member, to put his views across. In the last issue two reviews of the Canberra Convention were printed, One from Bob McMinn, our Secretary, and one from Ian McLean. I am not going to say who was right, I wasn't even at the convention. But we must all remember and accept that a review, published in TOSA NEWS is simply one person's thoughts. Remember also, that a critique in any newspaper is also one persons view. I disagree with many, but I accept the writer's right to state his case. We don't have to agree with all the articles in TOSA NEWS but don't forget, we can always turn over the page! Likewise with this article, if you don't agree with my right to state my case, turn over to another page!

I have said many times before, at members meetings and in this journal, that we have a magazine that other societies are envious of, and, of that, we can be proud! Congratulations TOSA NEWS for having the gumption to publish what you do.

DATES FOR  
YOUR DIARY



Monday 4 7.30pm. COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday 31 2.00pm. PAID CONCERT - "TWO PLUS ONE"  
ORION CENTRE CAMPSIE  
Featured artists will be Cliff Bingham, John Crawford  
and vocalist Bronwyn Hall.

**Admission:**

Adults	\$9.00
TOSA Member	\$7.00
Pensioner	\$6.00
TOSA Pensioner	\$5.00

**AUGUST**

Monday 1 7.30pm. COMMITTEE MEETING

Saturday 20 8.00am. 3801 TRAIN TRIP  
Depart Central Station, stopping at Strathfield, arrive at Moss Vale  
where, during the two and a half hour stop-over, lunch will be served.  
Travel down the mountain to Unanderra, returning to Sydney via  
Wollongong, stopping at Hurstville on return journey.  
Party of 8 compartments can be booked.  
For enquiries, phone John Rattray or Murray Ries on 750 3779. (AH).  
**BOOKING FORM IN THIS ISSUE BOOK EARLY AND SAVE**

Sunday 21 2.30pm. HANDICAPPED CHILDREN'S CHARITY CONCERT  
Earlwood/Bardwell Park R.S.L. Auditorium.  
See details in this issue.

Sunday 28 2.00pm. PAID CONCERT - MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL  
**FATHER JIM MILLER IN CONCERT**

**Admission:**

Adults	\$9.00
TOSA Member	\$7.00
Pensioner	\$6.00
TOSA Pensioner	\$5.00

**BOOK EARLY . . . . . BOOK EARLY**

**SEPTEMBER**

Monday 5 7.30pm. COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 14 8.00pm. CLUB NIGHT - QUARTERLY MEETING

**OCTOBER**

Saturday 1 8.00pm. TONY FENELON and JOHN ATWELL IN CONCERT  
ORION OPENING CONCERT - ORION CENTRE CAMPSIE

Sunday 2 1.30pm. NEIL JENSEN and MARGARET HALL IN CONCERT  
ORION CENTRE - CAMPSIE

Sunday 2 7.30pm. DINNER DANCE - FIVE PIECE DANCE BAND  
ORION CENTRE - CAMPSIE

Booking form for above functions in this issue.

Monday 10 7.30pm. COMMITTEE MEETING

NEWS FROM YOUR PATRON

Ian Davies

**PLAYING THE MIGHTY WURLITZER**

Going back in time to the early 1930's, I became very nostalgic when I think of some of our great Australian theatre organists of the past, who gave so much pleasure to thousands of people over the years in the Super Cinemas' in every state, and also through the medium of broadcasting, mainly on the ABC.

One who is old enough, will remember the theatre organ half hour, 1.00 till 1.30 every Sunday, featuring a different organist each week, a programme that had a huge listening audience throughout the nation.

Horace Weber, Arnold Coleman, Owen Holland, Charlie Tuckwell, Reubert Hayes, Stanfield Holliday and other famous names, too numerous to mention, most of whom have, departed to the great Console in the sky.

These greats of yesteryear, left behind a wonderful legacy, because they knew how to play the theatre organ and never tried to turn it into a Pizza Parlor electronic Juke Box, like some of these so called modern chord crazy players of today do, much to the average listener's sorrow.

It must never be forgotten that the theatre organ is a pipe organ blown by wind.

It is not a modern day electronic keyboard full of gimmicks, although it does have a toy counter department.

When I was learning the art of handling the Mighty Wurlitzer from top teachers, I was always advised to let the organ sing, to always keep a clean melodic and rhythmic approach to everything I played, and at all times avoid trying to tie the instrument up in musical knots, as it were.

Recent American recordings I have listened to, seem to have gone completely overboard in this ridiculous style of playing and gives one the impression that they are only interested in trying to blind fellow musicians with technical brilliance, whilst the listening audience is left up in the clouds wondering what they are trying to play and what it's all about.

On the other hand, most of the American organists, who have visited this country, have been top artists in their field.

May I say to our up and coming young organists, it is better to play the King of Instruments in a simple and gracious style using your stops with intelligence, always keeping a good melodic right hand, followed by a flowing, well balanced left hand, backed up by clear cut pedaling.

In conclusion, I would make it clearly understood, that all that I have written, are my own personal opinions, but be very sure, there are many theatre organ fans throughout the world, whom I'm sure would agree entirely with my advice.

The theatre organ is a majestic instrument, please let's play it and keep it that way.

That's all for now.

Ian Davies. JP.  
Patron.

"PIPE DREAMS" BOOKINGS

Many members have sent in bookings for the opening of the Orion Centre Wurlitzer.

We are presently changing our method of printing tickets and because of this, PIPE DREAMS tickets are not ready. Within the 2 - 3 weeks you should be receiving your tickets.

## THEATRE ORGAN RECORDING HAS A STREAK OF JAZZ

Cassette review by Ron Roberts



Hector Olivera

Hector Olivera was guest organist of the Theatre Organ Society last year and taped sections (on two cassettes) of portions of his recital last year at the Marrickville Town Hall, are now available.

Olivera is a singular man, a highly talented musician, who at the age of five was organist of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Buenos Aires.

Admitted to the Conservatory at six to study harmony, counterpoint and fugue, from thence he went to the University and finally to New York's Julliard.

He is now known as a concert and theatre organist and has made many records, including one on the famous Hinze of 1742 in the Bovenkirk of St. Nicholass in Kampen, Holland.

His performance on the Marrickville Wurlitzer is more classically orientated than popular, the lighter music being mixed with the Scherzo from Vierne's 2nd Organ Symphony, the Toccata of Dubois, the delightful Durand Waltz in E Flat and the Sinfonia from Bach's Cantata 29.

He sounds on occasions as if he would like to be playing a Cavaille-Coll or at least one of those 1840 Hill organs.

He plays two major improvisations, with one using the thematic line of Lloyd Webber's, I Don't Know How To Love Him as a principal melodic line over Bach's Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring as a accompaniment, the Bach finally taking over from the Webber.

It is something quite unexpected, with Olivera most sensitive in some variations of beauty.

Nothing of the essential nature of the Bach chorale is lost and the Lloyd Webber piece becomes more meaningful than it usually is.

His other extended improvisations are on variations of the tunes of Over The Rainbow and the Trolley Song, starting with a quiet version in cinema organ style on Rainbow and he finishes up close to modern classical organ music and treating the Trolley in something the same way before winding up with a Bachish fugato section.

Olivera reveals a real jazz streak to his nature in Sweet Georgia Brown borrowing from a swing band arrangement, where the members of the band whistle the main theme.

Olivera does the whistling part on the upper manual using the upper octave of the 8' Tibia and/or the 2' Piccolo on the same manual.

Olivera shows the real substance of jazz as no other organist has ever played on record, the beat is there, his use of xylophone reminds us a bit of the Hampton touch on vibes, and in a similar way too, the great drum solo at the end is not just a exhibition of the organ's "toy shop" department, but has its roots in the drumming of Gene Krupa.

Remarkable also, is the pedal work, which would seem to be done on the pedal 8' clarinet.

Actually, his various choruses correspond with solos by front line lead reed players in a band.

Other light music well played are Moonlight Serenade in a quite reflective version and a Jerome Kern medley, including Old Man River and Thank Heaven for Little Girls from Gi Gi with a Gershwin introduction, and interpolations.

The other side of Olivera's musical inclinations is shown in his playing of three organ classics, the Dubois Toccata, the Vierne Scherzo of the second organ symphony, the Bach Sinfonia from Cantata 29 and a work arranged for organ, the Waltz in E flat by Auguste Durand.



so that as one roll finishes, the second can be switched in so that the sound is continuous.

These units were used to accompany silent movies in the smaller picture houses and can be considered to be the pre-cursor to the Theatre Organs.

At each session of the cinema, a brief demonstration of the Photoplayer is given, followed by a part of a silent movie with the photoplayer accompanying it. Then a few shorts of early Australian sound features are shown, followed by a short early movie.

Best of all, admission is **FREE**.

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### THE HOME ELECTRONIC ORGAN PAGE

Number 5 by Alan Deveux.

Before we leave the subject of frequency dividers, I must issue a word of warning. Two electronic organs on the market - Kimball and Schobers Consolette organ (which is a kit organ) used neon lamps as frequency divider elements. I don't intend to describe how these work here, as Richard H. Dorf has covered this subject in several of his excellent books and leaflets. However, after a number of years (and both of these organs would be about 30 years old by now), the wires of the neon bulbs become extremely brittle where they leave the glass envelope. Drop, or even bump one of these organs slightly and the lamps will drop off by the dozen! Repairing one of these units becomes a very frustrating experience as I know only too well!

The first electronic organs use a very simple keying system. Each note had a shorting bar attached to the end of the key so that at rest, the key shorted all tones from the generators to earth. Of course, isolating resistors were used so that the shorting link did not stop the dividers from operating. This system, has proved to be quite reliable - I repaired an organ using this system quite recently and it was well over 40 years old. However, multiple contacts were needed to accommodate the various footage of stops required. Of course, there was no sustain or gradual keying of the sound - it was strictly an on/off contact. To make organs easier to play and to save a lot of wiring, all manufacturers started to look for ways to do all the keying of all the footages from just

a single contact, and at the same time provide some sustain and gradual keying of the sounds.

An elementary keyer is shown in figure 2. One contact per note is used to feed three or more diode keyers. Each keyer works as follows. With no key pressed, the voltage on the right hand side of the diode is lower than that on the left. The diode is cut off and no sound passes. When the key is pressed, a positive voltage is fed to the right hand side of the diode, which now conducts and passes tone from the generator to the voicing circuits. Unfortunately, a simple system such as this has some problems. A single diode has too much capacitance to completely cut off all sound and the higher harmonics of each tone will leak through. If the organ has severe high frequency cut applied to all voices, this system would be OK. but the organ would not have much brilliance. A second diode is usually added to eliminate this problem. The choice of the capacitor affects not only the attack time, but also the decay time (the time for the note to fade away after we release the key). If we add another diode and a variable supply, we can vary this sustain time and achieve a great many sound effects. Every manufacturer has his own variation on these circuits.

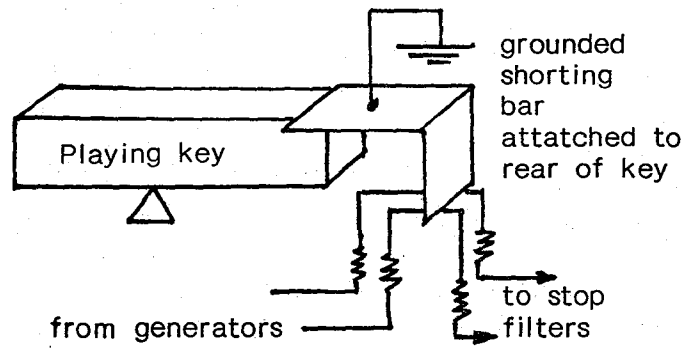
I said that this was one of the most difficult areas of organ design and I have not mentioned the three items which cause us the most concern. The first is the choice of contact materials. Silver is not desirable due to its tarnishing qualities, but gold clad wire (usually brass wire) is very good indeed. Other contact materials such as palladium-ruthenium or other rare metals are sometimes used. Unfortunately, most of the cheap and common wire materials are useless for reliable organ contacts. The second problem is that, during the gradual attack and decay of the tone - when less than the full waveform from the generators is being passed to the voicing circuits - the waveform may not be the same as it was when the note is sounding fully. The diagrams should make this clear.

Note that a square wave is the one waveform which retains its shape no matter what the keying voltage. The third problem is that the key will almost certainly be pressed at a time when the voltage from the generators is not zero. This means that there will be a discontinuity of tone.

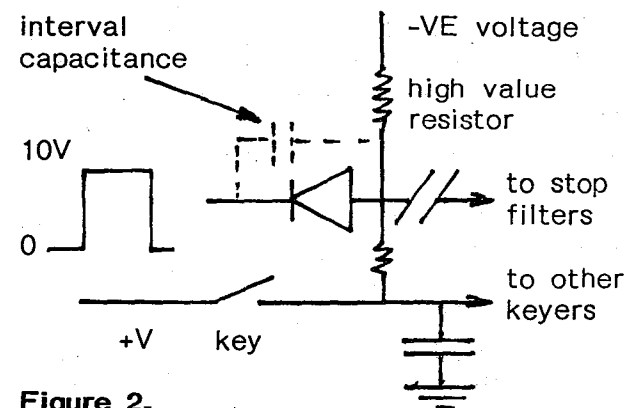
The problem is most severe for sine-wave tone generators (and partly explains the keyclicks of tone-wheel Hammond organs), less severe for saw-tooth waveforms and least severe for square waves. However, no matter which style of generator is keyed, there will normally be one cycle of tone which is actually higher than we desire due to the keying of the generator part-way through its cycle.

Fortunately this is usually not audible, providing the wave-form has a good harmonic content and the tone is at least partially filtered in the voicing stage.

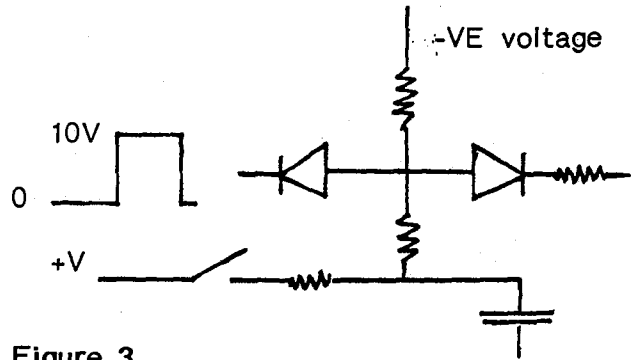
Nowadays, there are some exciting possibilities for home organ builders by using some of the CMOS range of intergrated circuits. Using a simple buffer circuit in a slightly unusual way (by keying its supply voltage) we could have a single IC supply a square wave in six different pitches from just one contact. There is great scope for experimentation here.



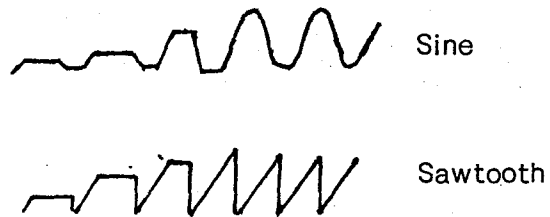
**Figure 1.** Early electronic organs used simple keying systems such as this.



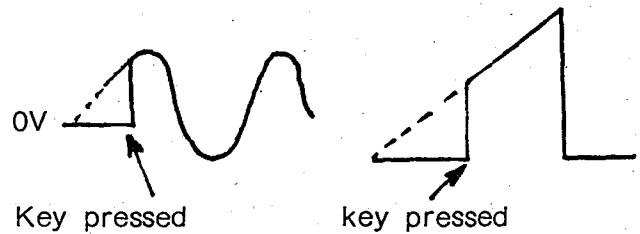
**Figure 2.** A simple electronic keyer such as this has too much leakage of tone through the diode.



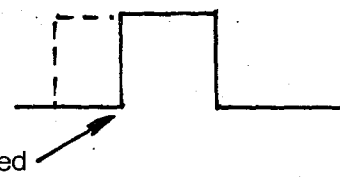
**Figure 3.** A second diode added to the keyer helps to cut down leakage of tone considerably.



**Figure 4.** Gradually keying any other waveform than a square waveform distorts the waveform.



**Figure 5.** Keying a waveform at other than its zero potential point will result in a keyclick.





## NEWS FROM BALLARAT



## LATEST ON THE MEMORIAL THEATRE RESTORATION

Stage 1 of the Memorial Theatre restoration, comprising essential works to make the theatre operational and up to health and safety standards, was originally costed at \$2.1 million. Ballarat City Council (the owners) and the Theatre Board have approached the State Government for the difference, \$800,000, which is in addition to the \$1.5 million already promised.

Stages 2 to 5, which includes front of house, the facade, refurbishing the interior - and the controversial orchestra pit, will cost a further \$1.95 million, at the least.

The latest report, dated 12 May states, that due to savings of over \$200,000 by the project managers, and an interest free loan from Royal South Street Society, stage lighting and fly grid will be included in stage 1.

The good news is that works to the extent of the funds currently available will be completed in time to allow the South Street Competitions to commence on 26 August in the Memorial Theatre. And, as far as we can predict, our Compton should be playing well enough to stage the Theatre Organ Sections on Sunday 11th September. The theatre will then close again early in 1989 to complete stage 1 - and other stages, if more funding is obtained.

POSTSCRIPT We have been told that the Union concerned is demanding redundancy payment to be made to the workers involved when the work in the theatre halts temporarily - even though they have other work to go to until the Memorial Theatre work re-commences!

News source . . . Ballarat 'Newsletter'

## NEWS FROM



## VISITORS DROP IN

Recently we have had the pleasure of playing host to some visiting organists, the first being Tom Mitchell from Sydney who was introduced to us by our long standing friend, Bill Powell.

Tom was a recording artist from 'way back' and had us mesmerised with quite a few fast novelty numbers, also hymns and pieces of classical music. He seemed to favour some heavy registration and hands full of chords which brought to life such numbers as The march from Aida and Hallelulah Chorus, Colonel Bogey, Dizzy Fingers and an original called Knave of Diamonds.

Graeme Terry was a foundation member of our Society and has a reputation as a very versatile all round keyboard entertainer. This we found out when he paid us a visit on a Wurlie work night recently. Like Tom, he was not used to the organ, but it was not long before he was reluctant to leave the seat. His repertoire included anything and everything, and wisely and carefully picked his way through the stops with careful method, until his confidence grew along with our pleasure, no doubt he'll be back.

Lastly, but certainly not least, was a visit by an illustrious crew member of Her Majesty's Armed Vessel, 'The Bounty'. He turned out to be none other than one David Walton Esq. of Adelaide, TOSE Penal Colony where he has served as an Editor of their bulletin. It was difficult to arrange for him to play our Wurlie as rehearsals for the school play were proceeding, even on Saturdays, until we could arrange this for 5.30pm.

I took him for a trip up to Mt. 'Wellington, a visit to St. George's at Battery Point, Dockside Fitness and Fern Tree Tavern, where we had delicious chicken soup and garlic bread and tea by an open fire - great stuff.

David had a special love of classical organ music and this became apparent as he proceeded into about twenty five minutes playing, although he had a go at some popular numbers as well. Like the other two visitors, he got some great classical sounds out of the Wurlie, which is surprising coming from a light entertainment instrument.

Well, our time together came to an end and we went our separate ways, but isn't it nice to know that our Wurlie just keeps on making new friends for us. It certainly has been well worth the effort.

News source. . . 'Vox Organum'

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## CONCERT REVIEW

### JOHN ATWELL & MARK WALTON

Marrickville Town Hall

29th May 1988

By Ron Roberts

John Atwell from Melbourne, made a great impact on an appreciative audience at the May 29 concert at Marrickville Town hall, in which he was joined by one of the most outstanding reed players in this country, Mark Walton, whose saxophone and clarinet playing is of an exceedingly high standard.

A program that was lively and immensely pleasing, covering as it did, a wide compass of music from Elton John to Wagner, including a fine work written by Atwell himself, "Celebration Fanfare".

It was obvious from the start that Atwell is not one of your theatre organists who relies on showmanship and exhibitionism to make contact with his listeners. He stresses at every point that the most important thing is musicality of performance together with the way the music is to be played in terms of a unit organ, that is, in choice of the registration and all that goes with it. John Atwell's playing on this occasion was impeccable, flawless in its many styles of music performed.

The remarkable thing about Atwell's playing is his approach. Stylistically it is individual, uninfluenced by others, alert to tonal colour, with frequent changes of registration, some-

times within a few bars, always contriving to give intriguing contrasts. His pedal work is constantly interesting with a fluid technique.

Commencing boldly, confidently, without announcement, he plunged straight into "Happy Day" in what was really a happy joyful mood. But the tune does remind one of a song from a 1927 musical hit, "Hit The Deck". This he followed by quite a dynamic performance of "Granada", decorated in various fashions from ballad to variation form. It was lightly scored and very well placed in its manner of playing.

Next, in celebration of the composer's hundredth birthday, came a bracket of Irving Berlin tunes. He blazed away first with a show stopper in "There's No Business Like Show Business" followed by a cheeky version of "Cheek To Cheek". In his "Always", played so beautifully, there was a hint of Jesse Crawford in what can only be described as classic playing in cinema organ style. "Blue Skies" revealed individuality in treatment in more ways than one even to a jazzy patch leading into an effervescent Top Hat.

Harking back to a different era, John Atwell resurrected the drawing room favourite of yesteryear, the "Destiny Waltz" by Sid Baines. The tonal design of the piece was largely tibia based and it was played straight without gimmicks in the language of its era with a great sweep. Notable at this point particularly, was the deft pedaling.

As a gesture to those who feel that some concession should be made to contemporary music, an Elton John piece was featured "I'm Still Standing". This proved not to be too bad of its type, fairly up tempo with plenty of rhythmic drive, but in overall context of the program, such music doesn't fit.

It was fascinating to hear Atwell's composition "Celebration Fanfare", which he wrote last year for the Easter Convention of TOSA in Adelaide for performance on the organ of the Adelaide Town Hall, where he gave the work its first performance. It was written with the Spanish Trumpets in mind, but at Marrickville he had to be satisfied with the Post Horn.

Atwell's performance was clear cut, capturing the kind of sound for which it was with the post horn biting amongst the diapason tone and the reeds. It was obviously music for an occasion and played with authority

and distinction. The work certainly leans very much towards the 19th century romanticism, reflecting French composers like Joseph Bonnet mixed with a bit of Herbert Howells, an English composer of organ music who wrote much in the early years of the present century, and continued writing until his death in 1983.



A jubilant John Atwell at the console

The second half began with the bright "Strike Up The Band" followed by Sousa's rousing "King Cotton March", the first abounding with a lively energy and the second a splendid recreation of the Sousa martial sound. One of the tastiest morsels of the afternoon was an exquisite performance of "All You Ask of Me" played tenderly and with nostalgia.

His "Siboney" had a stunning Spanish flavour, though he didn't search for its dramatic flavour as did Jesse Crawford in his wonderful reading of over fifty years ago. John Atwell's is probably the more authentic interpretation. Note too his imitation of the unique flavour of the Spanish trumpeter, which is nothing like that of the Mexican mariachi brass player.

As a welcome recall of great moments from musical comedy, Atwell played a selection from the Rogers and Hammerstein "South Pacific" with gusto and empathy with the music itself, making the point that the musical contained some very worthwhile things, the appreciation of which has been blunted by over exposure. Atwell played the music

sensitively and sympathetically especially "One Enchanted Evening" and "Younger Than Springtime".

His concert finished on some serious notes, "Sleeping Beauty Waltz", and the "Prelude to Act 111" of Lohngryn. Whether the latter was Atwell's own arrangement or one of the many Wagner transcriptions made by organist Edwin Lemaire is not known. But it was a spectacular performance, with the kind of pedal work that require skill and technique.

The associate artist was the well known sax player Mark Walton, whose proficiency probably outranks that of the late Clive Amadio, one of the finest Australian exponents of these two instruments. Clive incidentally had a connection with the Prince Edward Orchestra playing in it at the time it was conducted by Isadore Goodman and Les Waldron was playing the organ there.

On saxophone, Walton has a round singing one, with a well controlled vibrato which eminently fitted "Plasir d'amour". In contrast, he offered Scott Joplin's "New Rag", a merciful change from the "Entertainer". In this and a work by herbert Flower of Sky, "Carillon".



Mark Walton

Mark gave ample evidence of his firm attack. Changing to clarinet, he played "Stick of Licorice" which clearly demonstrated his versatility, and if one knows one's jazz, there was whiff of the Chicago style that marked the early days of Benny Goodwin. His final item prior to interval was Giameiere's "Carnival of Venice", one of those pieces regarded by musicians as a 'circus' piece, but it is extremely demanding. It really requires a virtuoso, but Walton is very much in that class and he tossed it off with magnificent ease.

Later in the afternoon, Mark recalled Freddie Gardiner in "Valse Vanite" as well as a superbly absurdly comic piece "Saxophobia". Walton is a talented artist who surely gave great pleasure to everybody in the audience. There must also be high praise for the outstanding accompaniments provided by John Atwell, always supportive but never obtrusive.

The overall high standard of performance by John Atwell was always to be appreciated in all that he did in his quiet reserved way.

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### CAPITOL FUND RAISING CONCERT REVIEW

Paddington Woollahra R.S.L. Club  
11th June 1988  
By Col Tringham

Only 50 members and friends turned up for this concert, which was a great shame as there was a great deal of good music to enjoy in this pleasant atmosphere.

Ian started the concert with a little piece of 'Barney Google', but then went on to his "Naval Trio" - 'Sons of the Sea', 'There's Something About a Sailor' and the 'Dambusters March'. Ian proved once again that he is the absolute Organ master of the bright and bouncy number and it was hard not to swing out on the dance floor to the first two numbers. This was followed by an old and tuneful number called 'By the Bend of the River', a pleasant ballad. Ian followed this with 'Whistling Rufus' - well played but with a little too much sustain on the tibias for such a fast-moving piece. His Glen Miller bracket was excellent, especially 'Stairway to the Stars', played without tremors and with plenty of bounce.

Ian then played Eric Coates 'Sleepy Lagoon' and followed that with two snappy Latin-American numbers, 'Aye Aye Aye' being especially good.

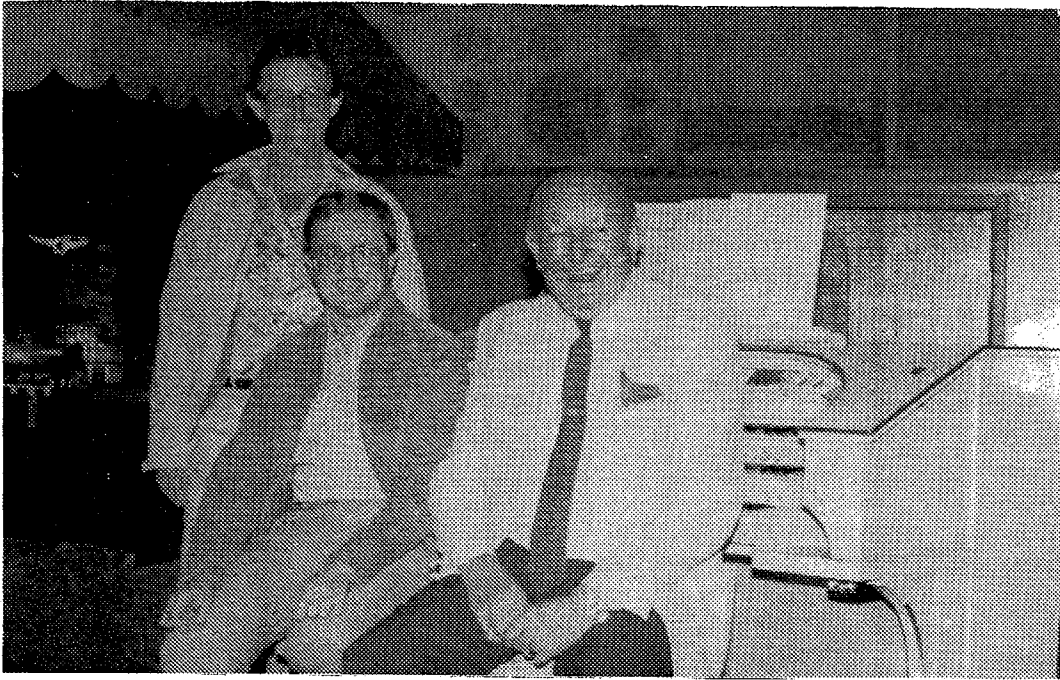
Neil Palmer then took his place on the organ bench and played six items, mostly ballads such as 'A Wonderful Day Like Today', 'Love Has Been Good to Me', 'Here's That Rainy Day', 'They're Playing my Song', 'You Light up my Life' and 'Just the Way You Are'. This Rodgers Trio organ has both a reasonable piano stop and a real glockenspiel and Neil made intelligent use of both features. He also seemed to be very much at home on all three manuals, although it was only afterwards that I learnt he had only one hour practice on this organ.

Bill Schumacher started his bracket with the theme tune from our Radio Program - 'The Good old Bad old Days'. Then followed 'What a Wonderful World', 'Serenta' by Leroy Anderson and an especially polished Irving Berlin selection. As always, Bill's playing was delight to hear - very smooth and with superb technique coupled to excellent stop selections which were changed frequently but with good taste.

Ian Davies then returned to the organ and played a piece of 'straight organ music' and followed this with the most complete contrast - a very well played 'Organ Boogie'. The concert was brought to a close with a selection of bouncy French numbers and Ian's signature tune 'Cruising Down the River'.

If one had to criticise the event (which seems to be the norm these days unfortunately) it is a pity the event started fifteen minutes late. This is discourteous to all those who took the trouble to arrive on time - forcing them to wait for one or two stragglers. The organ has had the loudspeakers removed from the console and remounted in the walls. A small amount of readjustment to reduce the high frequency response of the Tibia amplifier and to revoice one or two other stops, would improve the sound. The untuned percussions tend to overpower everything else too. The event was compared as usual by Frank Ellis in his usual competent but slightly overwordy manner.

The amount of \$208 was raised by the afternoon and we must thank Patron Ian Davies for his time and energy in organising this event.



Left to right. Bill Schumacher, Neil Palmer and Ian Davies.

### TOSA GARAGE SALE

The garage sale which was held recently at the home of committee members John Rattray and Murray Ries was a great success. Over \$350 was raised for inclusion in the Orion Installation project funds.

It was great to see new faces willing to assist in both manning the stalls and also in providing goods for sale.

Everything from plants, clothes, kitchen implements and other assorted nic nacs were on sale. At the end of the day only a small amount of merchandise was left and this was given to a member for inclusion in a stall to be held at Hurstville in August, with all proceeds going to the Arthritis Society.

With the great success of this venture we may look at making this a regular event. Everybody that came along enjoyed themselves and easy money was made for the society.

Thank you everybody who made this day what it was, and thank you to members and friends who provided all their unwanted, pre-owned 'memorabilia' for such a good cause.

### T.O.S.A. (N.S.W. Division) BICENTENNIAL

#### MUSICAL COMPOSITION CONTEST

#### PLEASE NOTE

The Bicentennial Musical Composition Contest closing date has been extended from 30th. June to 31st. July.

Entry forms are available from the Committee.

#### REMEMBER

The entry form **MUST** be in the hands of:-

The Secretary  
T.O.S.A. (NSW Division) Inc.  
Box 474 P.O.  
SUTHERLAND 2232.

#### NOT LATER THAN MIDNIGHT

31ST. JULY 1988

## PORTLAND'S ORGAN GRINDER

by Grace McGinnis

Reprinted from an article in

**THEATRE ORGAN** March/April 1988.

Catch the starlight in a child's eyes. Chase the laughter of the children of all ages as they watch Laurel and Hardy try to sell Christmas trees in California. Share with a little white-haired lady her joy at hearing the 1919 "Mickey" again "after all those years." Feel the power of the pipes as he whole restaurant shakes during "Star Wars." Share with us the magic of the Organ Grinder.

Much of this joy is generated by Dennis Hedberg's "ultimate toy," his passion since he was sixteen years old and the "working laboratory" for his research on the physics of tremelos (this organ has 17). The 3/13 WurliTzer from the Portland Oriental Theatre inspired this creativity and is now the nucleus of the Organ Grinder's WurliTzer.

ATOS members heard this WurliTzer at the 1973 National Convention when Lyn Larsen and Jonas Nordwall presented it on its first 17 ranks. It was also heard during the 1981 convention when Seattle brought the group to Portland for a day. This summer, fifteen years and 30 ranks later, conventioners will hear Paul Quarino and Walt Strony perform on this awesome music machine.

The Organ Grinder WurliTzer has, from its beginning, been Dennis Hedberg's brain-child. Starting with the 13 ranks, he added the 32' Diaphones from Portland's Liberty Theatre and has subsequently obtained pipes and parts from all over the country. The contra 32' Bourdon, for example, is from the Old North Church (of Paul Revere fame) in Boston, the four-manual console came from Boston's Metropolitan Music Hall Theatre, and other components were once heard in Cleveland, Chicago, Denver and Brooklyn. The instrument now contains an example of every major voice ever used in WurliTzer pipe organs. It also has the thirteen-note timpani (some call them the garbage-can lids) from the Brooklyn Fox, and a rare set of Swiss Bells from a theatre in Maine. A close look at the toy counter will reveal an authentic submarine "dive" horn which can probably be heard on the other side of town.

Because all of its pipes are contained in glass chambers, so they may be viewed from

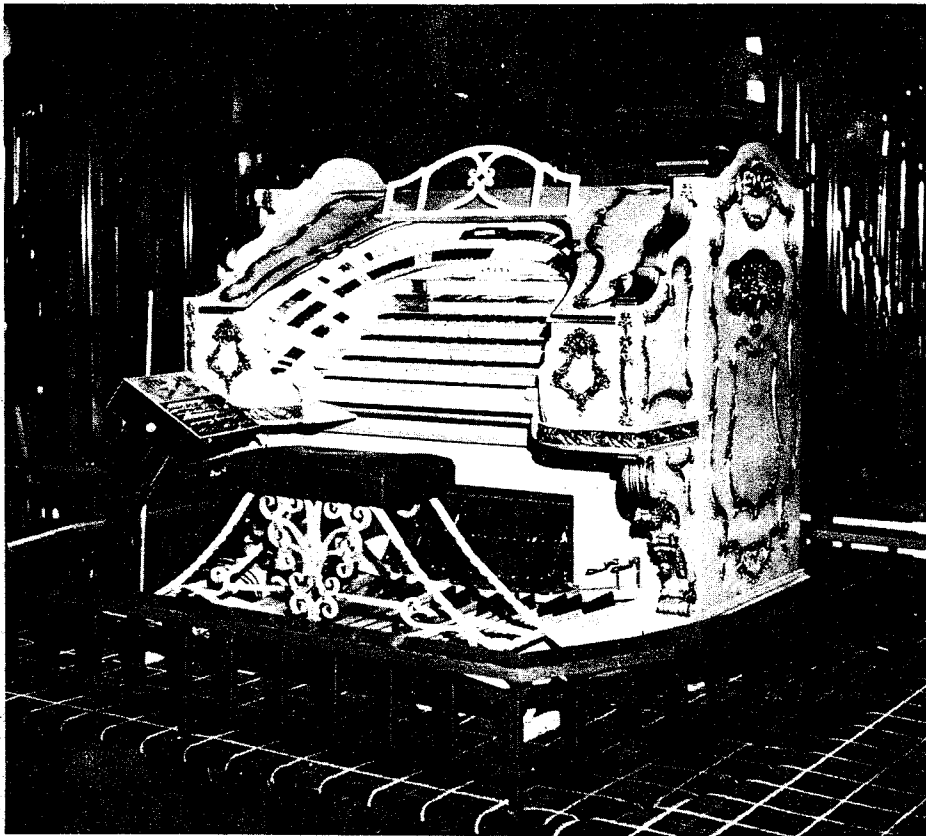
outside as well as inside the restaurant, it is difficult to maintain a constant temperature (for tuning stability) so twenty tons of refrigeration equipment are employed to keep the chambers and blower from overheating. The wind for this machine is generated by a three-stage turbine blower powered by a 60-hp electric motor which develops over 6,000 cubic feet of wind per minute at static pressures of 37 and 69 inches of water displacement. A totally solid state electronic relay and power supply was created for the organ. This system utilizes about 35,000 diodes, 4,000 discrete transistors and thousands of tiny components.

Dennis Hedberg's quest for the finest theatre organ of its kind in the world actually began when he heard the pipes in the Oriental Theatre and continued through his years as an electronics engineer for the Rogers Organ Company in Hillsboro and, for a period of time as manager of the Oriental Theatre. When the Oriental closed, Dennis was able to buy its WurliTzer, and finding a new home for it led him to the restaurant business. In April of 1985, Hedberg became the sole owner of the Organ Grinder and, while the organ as it now stands is the largest of its kind in the world, it is very possible that it is not yet finished!

Organ buffs in this area have been avid "Organ Grinder WurliTzer Watchers" as the various components of the organ were added, and we have concurrently been privileged to hear some of the finest organists in the country. Regular staff organists in the seventies were Jonas Nordwall, Paul Quarino, Jack Coxon and Don Simmons. While no longer on the staff, Jonas presents occasional "Classic Night" programs which never fail to fill the house. In August 1985, Paul initiated a Sunday afternoon program of Old-Time Gospel Music which has been exceptionally well received and manages to fill the tables against such competition as the Super Bowl. Organists Dan Bellomy, Don Feely and Russ Chilson, complete the staff of musicians and provide musical entertainment which appeals to all ages and tastes. As we have heard styles and sounds created by different artists, we are reminded that the theatre organ is perhaps the most versatile instrument in all of history.

The versatility of the Organ Grinder WurliTzer and of the artists who play it may well be the key to the enchantment of the restaurant. When patrons can experience popular, classical, Gospel or rock music in an

ambience augmented by thousands of lights, hourly silent movies and a friendly dancing mouse, there is clearly something there that appeals to all who have experienced it - that magic we hope to share with you.



Elegant four-manual console controls the 47 ranks behind it.

*Claude Neuffer Photo*



Lyn Larsen at the 1973 Convention when the Wurlitzer was much smaller.

*Claude Neuffer Photo*



## VIEWS & NEWS

from

Ian McLean

### AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST (AND BEST?) THEATRE ORGAN PROJECT

In last month's column I promised that full details would be revealed about this exciting project in this issue. Unfortunately, the official press release date has been moved to the 19th July. Although this issue of "TOSA NEWS" is dated July, it will be distributed in June and this has made this issue too early for a full story to be published.

Full details will be now be in the August issue of "TOSA NEWS" and TOSA VIC's "VOX".

### TONY O'BRIEN IN PERTH



Tony O'Brien at the Canberra Compton console.

Before publication of my critique and that of "Canberra Times" music critic, Bill Hoffman, in my column last month, I asked one of the owners of the Perth Karrinyup Wurlitzer, RAY CLEMENTS, to supply me with a copy of the Tony

O'Brien Perth concert on that organ. This tape arrived and listening to it turned out to be a mixture of revelation and confirmation.

TONY O'BRIEN's playing at this concert was much cleaner, and more empathetic with the instrument than at the devastating Canberra Compton Convention concert. The classical numbers, either in the improvisational sense or those of a totally pure classical content, were noticeably better. However, his theatre organ performances were not consistent. When he was playing an arrangement that was basically someone else's, he almost got the registrations in balance. This is hardly surprising as he was using someone else's proven ideas. However, when it came to his approach to a theatre organ arrangement his registrations were a mixture of heavy handed, ponderous and screeching sounds.

I once heard a recording of a theatre pipe organ concert by that wonderful classical organist, VIRGIL FOX, on the Wichita Century Wurlitzer. His approach to the instrument in a registration sense was just as confused as TONY O'BRIEN's. It was heavy and insensitive. No one could question the fact that Virgil Fox was a musical genius with the classical organ repertoire. He was a masher at a theatre pipe organ.

TONY O'BRIEN in Perth showed that he has a deft comprehension of, and ability to put into use, classical pipe organ registration. Even on a Wurlitzer! His use of other people's approaches to the Wurlitzer showed that he can implement orchestral theatre organ ideas that work. At the moment his improvisational powers are almost exclusively in the classical idiom. However, the Perth concert showed some positive glimpses of his wish to venture into the world of jazz and theatre organ improvisation. A move that I believe that he can make successfully because he wants to!

The fact that the Perth audience responded so enthusiastically doesn't surprise me. His Perth programme and the styles he tried to use in his programme were varied to such a degree that even with the shocking timing in such brackets as the Joplin rags and the over use of 16' stops and Sub Octave couplers, it was still interesting and had dynamism. However for one of the Perth concert's promoters and the



other owner of the Karrinyup WurliTzer, JOHN FUHRMANN, to write that "based on Tony O'Brien's performance at Karrinyup, the selection of this new young artist for the 1988 Convention in Canberra was an astute one" is ludicrous! What does one performance have to do with another? In Perth Tony played on an instrument that he had some understanding of. What that had to do with another performance 4000 kilometers away on an instrument that he didn't have any empathy with escapes me. Oops, it doesn't escape me at all!

The main instigator of the choice of Tony O'Brien for Canberra desperately needed something in print in a vain and frantic attempt to give some credence to his choice. The only positive review to date, anywhere, was our very own Secretary's! (A hooray for TOSA NSW for printing different points of view.)

All the Perth concert did was to prove that:

- a. Tony O'Brien is a better musician than his Canberra concert displayed.
- b. The Canberra Compton was not the proper vehicle for such an inexperienced theatre organist to be featured on.
- c. Tony O'Brien was entirely the wrong choice to be the featured artist for the Canberra Convention. This convention artist needed to be an experienced theatre organist who could cope with the problems and different characteristics of the Compton. Preferably a young and contemporary artist. And English? (they would at least have had some Compton experience).
- d. Tony O'Brien really doesn't know how to use a synthesizer effectively.

From comments made by some members of the Canberra Convention Committee, and the TOSA ACT Division's committee, O'Brien's main supporter did his best to ensure that Tony O'Brien won his spot by default. However, as that person puts it "he was the only one who replied!" I don't need to really report any more than that. Neither situation says much for these ACT committees in their contracting of this artist nor for the artist's Australian mentor, when he attempts to give credence to his choice with such a denigrating remark. I leave it to you to be the

judge. But, what of Tony O'Brien?

As I have said before he knows where he is at. He knows just what he knows musically, he also knows what he needs to learn. He wants to become not just a good theatre organist, but a unique contemporary one. He has all the ingredients to get there. He must show more discretion than he did in this instance in accepting concert bookings.

#### FOR THE RECORD

"HECTOR 87- Hector Olivera Live From Sydney Australia" - TOSA 8801 - Double cassette album. \$15.00 from TOSA NSW.



This album is the only official recording to be released by Hector following his very successful concert tour of Australia last year. According to some reports he is looking into taking legal action against TOSA VIC for their Moorabbin release. Oh! The politics of theatre organ! So what of this recording?

It represents the highlights of Hector's quite amazing concert last September at Marrickville Town Hall on the 2/11 WurliTzer. A concert that had the forever critical BILL SCHUMACHER (unless he's at a Nordwall or Fenelon concert!) declaring that "I thought I'd heard everything!" and, "That's the best I've heard here!" I have to say - me too! However, does it all transcribe to a worthwhile recording format? Mostly yes!

The programme includes; "That's

Entertainment", "Thank Heaven For Little Girls", Vierne's "Scherzo" from his 2nd Symphony, "I Don't Know How to Love Him", "The Teddy Bear's Picnic", "Over The Rainbow and The Trolley Song", "Sweet Georgia Brown", "Moonlight Serenade", the "Tocatta" of T. Dubois, Durand's "Waltz in Eb", A Jerome Kern medley and Bach's "Symphonia (Cantata £29). These numbers were chosen and placed in their order by Hector. A selection that provides the listener with some great musical contrasts. So why did I say mostly worthwhile?

The opener, the BILLY NALLE, arrangement of "That's Entertainment" would make anyone sit up and take notice. Hector plays it as if it were his own arrangement. Mind you, he has added enough to the original so that this performance could almost be described as such. My objection is to the second number and the slightly low recording level. Still, the lower than normal recording level is easily corrected by turning up your volume level a little more than usual. There is a benefit from this. There is a much better frequency response range than expected as the tape has not been saturated with signal like so many commercially available cassette recordings. Item number two is the awfully edited "Thank Heaven For Little Girls". It should have been left out altogether as it doesn't make for a good recording number even though it fitted well in the concert programme. From here on this recording is sheer brilliance.

My favourites were the tour de force, virtuosic rendition of the "Over The Rainbow/Trolley Song" arrangement - all 19 minutes and 20 seconds of it! - the sensitive and succinctly clever "I Don't Know How To Love Him", the quite incredible "Sweet Georgia Brown" which was complete with an amazing jazz drum solo - on standard WurliTzer traps!, all those lively question and answer statements in the Dubois "Tocatta" and, of course the sweeping opener, "That's Entertainment".

On this memorable concert day it was quite interesting to be able to contrast the Hector Olivera from other concert days. His enthusiasm for this organ in its home had him effusive, confident, and so-o-o happy! The larger than life acoustics of Marrickville Town Hall suited his orchestral sweeps

to a tee. This effect that so enthralled Hector has been extremely well captured in this recording which was engineered by RON WILSON and BILL SCHUMACHER. The instrument sounds like 20 ranks!

This is not a background music set. Neither is it a collection specially prepared for a commercial recording. It is a recording of one of the most incredible theatre organ performances that has been heard in Australia. Already hundreds of copies have been sold. I highly recommend that you get yours as soon as possible.

I must also commend TOSA NSW for taking the financial risk in producing this very professional product. The cover is excellent, the packaging is as more cassette albums should be. The recording quality is top class.

"ANYTHING GOES!" - A Compact Disc - George Wright at the Hollywood Philharmonic organ (a state of the art WurliTzer based instrument of over 30 ranks plus electronic ranks, effects, and synthesizers) - Banda Records DIDX 2532 - \$30.00. Available from TOSA NSW and TOSA VIC.



Programme: "Anything Goes" Overture, "Don't Fence Me In", "Easy To Love", "Love For Sale", "In The Still of The Night", "I've Got You Under My Skin", "Friendship", "I Love Paris", "My Heart Belongs To Daddy", "An Old fashioned Garden", "I Concentrate On You", "A Kiss me Kate Scenario".

"A scintillating trip to Porterville via Hollywood and the Broadway Stage!"

This is the claim made on the cover of this CD. It delivers all of this and so much more!

"Anything Goes", proves conclusively that GEORGE WRIGHT is the greatest recording theatre organist to have lived. In fact he is probably the greatest in any sense. At 70 years of age he continues to push the artform forward. Age is no barrier. No listener of this CD without some background to the theatre organ world would guess at the age of this inventive, innovative musical genius.

In "Anything Goes" George Wright takes a pile of classy, sassy, sexy and sometimes gaudy COLE PORTER music and makes it ageless.

I've played this CD to many people of all ages and with differing levels of musical appreciation. The reaction to "Anything Goes" has been entirely positive. This is not just an album for theatre organ aficionados. Like so many of George Wright's recording projects this CD has been created for lovers of good music. Mr Wright's treatments have appropriate amounts of pathos, humour, depth, rhythm and life. Above all they are uniquely innovative and creative.

When George Wright laid down the plans for his "Hollywood Philharmonic Organ" in 1979 he stipulated that it have an interface for synthesizers. At the time there was some criticism of this decision. How wrong the detractors have been proven. In "Anything Goes" we hear vocal ensembles used extensively and other synthesized sounds used to colour the music with interest.

The masterpiece arrangement and rendition of the haunting "In The Still of The Night" sees Wright using such facilities and sounds with great orchestral and musical effect. Interestingly, at no time does the listener feel that these additions detract from, or stick out like sore thumbs, from the theatre pipe ensemble. This is the secret. All effects, both pipe synthetic and electronic synthetic are blended masterfully so that the combined result is of a completeness that leaves the music paramount. The listener becomes so absorbed in the performance that they are oblivious to the fact that synthesizers are involved at all.

George Wright has brought these synthesized and sampled sounds into the theatre pipe organ tonal scenario without detracting from either's integrity.

Mr Wright has often stated that so much of a theatre organ arrangement of a song should follow the way a good singer would deliver it. Consequently when he incorporates a vocal ensemble its effect is both real and surreal. You have to hear it to believe it. They sound just like real choirs mixing in with the music, and at times making quite dramatic solo statements.

So many times artists have tried to mix synthesizers and pipes. Mostly these attempts have been abject failures, or, at best, musical curiosities of dubious value. Not in "Anything Goes"! This is no "let's chuck a synthesizer on the music rest and tell everyone how different we are"! "Anything Goes" is a tasteful, musically adept and highly entertaining incorporation that, at all times has integrity.

On this album George Wright represents some numbers that he has presented before. Even with a similar arrangement. Don't let this dissuade you from searching for this recording. With this instrument, his age, his experience and these times of greater understanding amongst people towards others, it is obvious that he has a musical and temperamental maturity that overcomes the coldness of the laser pick up and the mechanics of a speaker system. What do I mean?

In this album's version of "Love For Sale", George Wright displays a real understanding of just who he is, where he is, and what he is. The similarities between this arrangement and the Hi Fi Records version of 30 years ago are many on a purely note for note basis. However, the Hi Fi performance displays an impatience and petulance. Almost like saying "Here I am! Take notice!" The second version recorded many years later, seems to me to express some hurt. So, maybe, then "Love" may as well have been for "Sale"? The "Anything Goes" version is the consummate delivery. It has all the key aspects of the earlier performances but is so well paced that at times it becomes almost subliminal in its understatement. There is no confusion as he

had some years back. No denial.

This entire CD states his love of what gift he has and what the instrument gives to him. It is wonderful to be able to be part of this celebration and to be able to listen to it over and over.

The unique instrument that features on this CD has been lovingly collected and created by some of George's ardent supporters. They wanted to develop an instrument for him that would not present him with any musical walls. The result is a recording instrument of unparalleled versatility and clarity. This CD, like it's predecessor, "Red, Hot and Blue" provides for maximum listener interest and entertainment.

Entertainment is the key word. But, entertainment, combined with a creative musical genius and a crystal clear sense of humour, that has made George Wright the musical and commercial success that he is. Proof positive that there is no need to always take everything to the lowest common denominator to put "bums on seats". The problem is that there is only one George Wright!

Any gripes? "Anything Goes" starts of with an authentic (to Porter) couple of jarring chords. It uses one electronic cymbal that is too far forward on the sound stage and "Old Fashioned Garden" was, by comparison to some of the other arrangements, bland, but it would keep all the Jesse Crawford fans happy.

"Don't Fence Me In" is a real scream. The Wright humour is at its rawest. He puts a Vox through the most uncharacteristic exercise I've ever heard to recreate the whinnies and bleating sounds of being "down on the farm!" As for the synthesized recreation of the creation of the things you don't want to walk in when you're down there? Well, you'll just have to buy the CD won't you?

"Anything Goes" is the best recording that I've heard from this master musical craftsman. Personally, "In The Still of The Night", "I Concentrate On You", "Love For Sale", the Tocatta and Fugue in D'd "I Love Paris" and the mix and match "I Get A Kick Out of You"/"I've Got You Under My Skin" were my favourites.

To close this review are these words:

from George Wright as he refers to his utilisation of synthesizers and samplers; "Very little of this medium is included in the Cole Porter output, but it does make its color and presence known here and there peeking out between the curtains.....It will, of course, only enhance but never replace these inimitable sounds which I prophecy can never be duplicated by samplers. I'm proud that I was again able to be the innovator rather than the imitator."

How very true and he promises even more interesting things in the future.

In "Anything Goes" George Wright has taken some of the best music from the thirties, some of the best arrangement ideas from the life of the theatre organ, and to these ingredients he has added a contemporary overlay and maturity. The result? A unique collection of performances that stand on their own. This is not thirties music played in a thirties style. "Anything Goes" has musical relevance beyond its theatre organ birth and the date of its compositions.

#### COMMENT:

The musical genius of GEORGE WRIGHT, coupled with the directions currently being taken by other notable exponents of the instrument are rapidly expanding the theatre organ artform. With the HECTOR OLIVERA combination of orchestral-classical-jazz improvisations, the ROB RICHARDS FX-20/pipe experiments, the dynamic jazz from DAN BELLOMY, and the new technological platforms from TROUSDALE and WILCOX, we are indeed lucky to be witnessing theatre organ's incredible metamorphosis.

#### FATHER "JIM" MILLER IN CONCERT

2pm. 28th August 1988  
Marrickville Town Hall



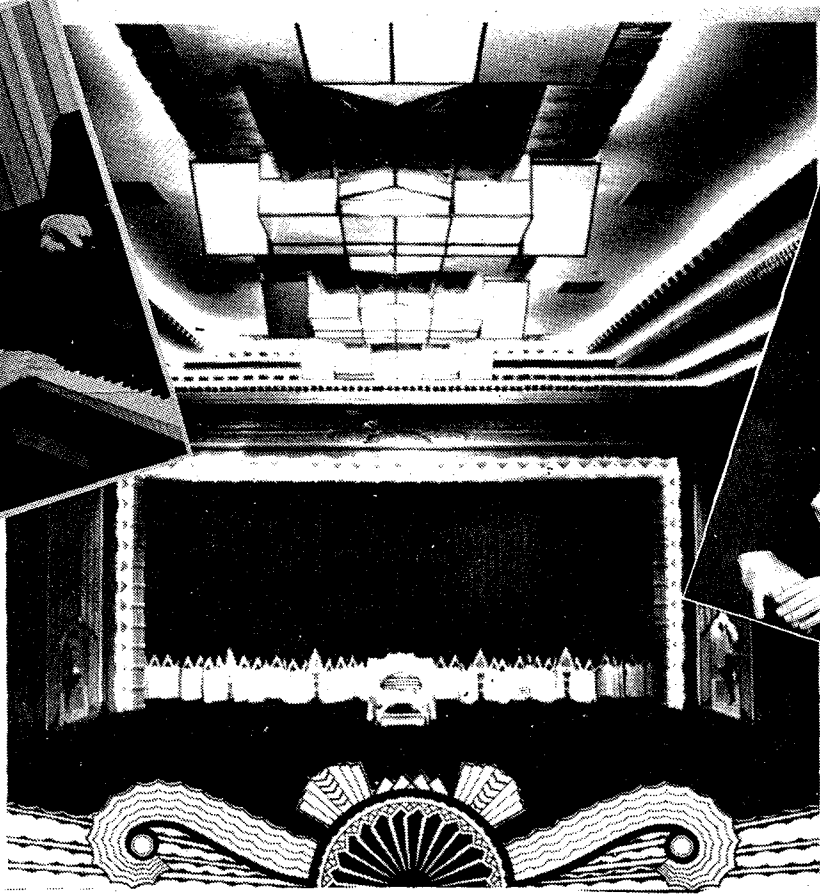
As one of the most popular contemporary organists, Father "Jim" Miller, lovingly known throughout the theatre organ world as the "Padre of the Pits", has gained a reputation playing the music of Fats Waller and Duke Ellington. For an enjoyable concert filled with fun and laughter, as well as a moving trip down memory lane ... Let yourself go!

PH: 908 4344

MIKE WALSH'S  
**HAYDEN ORPHEUM PICTURE PALACE**

AUSTRALIAS ONLY ART DECO TWIN PICTURE PALACE. \* MILITARY RD. CREMORNE, (OPPOSITE THE METROPÔLE).

**NEIL JENSEN AND TONY FENELON**  
**AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER KEYBOARD ENTERTAINERS,**  
**TOGETHER ON — STAGE**



**AT THE**  
**HAYDEN ORPHEUM PICTURE PALACE, CREMORNE.**  
**SUNDAY, JULY 10th at 1pm**  
**ALL SEATS \$10.00.**  
**RESERVE YOUR SEATS TODAY!**

A variety packed programme featuring a sparkling kaleidoscope of popular piano and theatre organ duets and solos will be presented by these two internationally acclaimed entertainers.

"The Warsaw Concerto", "Rhapsody in Blue", "Memories" from CATS, and the "Dream of Olwyn" are but just a few of the blockbusters to be performed in this "not to be missed concert".



MIKE WALSH'S  
**HAYDEN ORPHEUM PICTURE PALACE**

