

TOSA NEWS

December 2008
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Australia's Favourite



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From the President



Hello all,
Thank you to all those who attended the AGM.

As I stated in my AGM report (printed elsewhere), the Society is in a good, strong financial position. It is unfortunate that the negotiations for a venue in which to install the Christie have hit a hurdle. The group with whom we were negotiating had shown considerable interest initially, however we are now finding it difficult to get a response to our written submission. We are still working on this. In addition, one of our members has suggested a church which would be suitable but, due to other ongoing church matters, a submission needs to be delayed for possibly some months. If you are aware of any possible location, preferably within the Sydney metropolitan area, please contact me.

In the annual report I only mentioned a couple of people by name. It is a dangerous thing to start listing people, because you're sure to miss someone. Accordingly I wish to acknowledge my sincere appreciation to all who help TOSA in any way. Without our volunteers we would have no ticket sales, no afternoon teas, no candy bar, no maintenance of the organs, no membership Secretary therefore no members, no "setter upperers" and "packing upperers", no ushers, no recordings bar, no lights, no video, no Editor, no photographer, no printer, no packaging and posting, no TOSA News, - no concert. And I'm sure to have missed several people to whom I offer my sincere apologies. Most importantly, none of these would be required if it were not for you - our members. Thank you for your membership - it helps pay the bills; thank you for attending concerts and home parties - we know you enjoy the music and we enjoy your company.

Finally may I wish each of you a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous, musical, New Year.

Happy organising, Geoff Brimley

Editorial



Hello members.
Yes I am back from a most enjoyable holiday on the other side of the world and am pleased to say that we took some great weather with us to the UK. Many Londoners thanked us for coming over complete with sunshine and blue skies for most of the time. My wife and I were able to tick some more boxes on our bucket list and visited both Windsor Castle and Blenheim Palace on perfect days with not a cloud to be seen. We rode the London Eye and visited the Millenium Dome, walked across Jubilee Bridge and the Millenium Bridge, visited the houses of Parliament and walked through Westminster Great Hall on the way to a meeting, found the Sherlock Holmes pub, went to the Old Vic Theatre at Waterloo.

We also did a tour of Royal Albert Hall and saw the recently restored Grand Organ with its 10,000 pipes. I also went to the morning service at St Paul's Cathedral and heard the restored organ with its new console located down near the choir. Sunday lunch was taken in the Dickensian Pub a few yards from the Cathedral and on another occasion the family had the Sunday Roast at the Kings Arms Hotel just a block away from our place in Waterloo which was voted one of the best pubs in London.

I also visited the New Brentford Musical Museum near Kew Junction and can recommend a visit for anyone heading to the old country. See article in this issue.

I want to thank the Editorial Team for a great job in looking after the November issue of TOSA News in my absence and to thank Dr John Batts for his excellent review of the Richard Hills Concert at Marrickville. See John's interview with Richard in this issue.

Many thanks to all the contributors to this edition.

Enjoy the music,
Ernie Vale
PO Box A2322
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editor@tosa.net.au

From the Mailbox...



Thanks for your responses and please continue to email or write in telling us what you think.

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit or shorten any submitted comments and as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division).

Please submit all comments via email to:
The Editor
editor@tosa.net.au
or in writing to:
The editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)
PO Box A2322 Sydney South, NSW 1235

New Members

TOSA (NSW) welcomes new members and wish them a long & happy stay.

Robert Allen of Croydon
Raymond Bramwell of Normanhurst
Peter Henry of Dundas
Lynette Hunt of Westgate

Long time member Chris Styles has been presenting HIGHLAND FM 107.1 for many years and now it IS BROADCASTING TO THE WORLD!!!

AS OF 10.00 PM TUESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2008 HIGHLAND FM HAS REACHED BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AND NOW HAS A WORLD AUDIENCE VIA THE INTERNET. TO LISTEN GO TO THE STATION WEB SITE <http://www.highlandfm.org.au> then go to the 'SOUND LOUNGE', click on the Mike Icon and wait for Windows Media Player to open.

Congratulations Chris and all others involved in achieving access to a world audience for your program.

Fractional Stops

"It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except all the others that have been tried."
- Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around."
- Will Rogers

"Assassins!"
- Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957) to his orchestra

"Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right."
- Henry Ford (1863-1947)

"Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers."
- Socrates (470-399 B.C.)

Organ for Small Donation!

Sydney Adventist Hospital Cancer Support Centre has an **Eminent Solina P240** organ at the Jacaranda Lodge to go to a good home for a small donation. It is in very good condition and seems to be in A1 working order.

The keyboards are three and a half octaves and offset, not in alignment with each other.

Please contact Margaret Adams, Manager Cancer Support Centre/ Jacaranda Lodge Sydney Adventist Hospital Ph 9487 9062 Fax 9487 9065 Email margareta@sah.org.au

Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.

Who Are We?

The NSW Division is now in its 48th year having been formed in 1960 to provide the opportunity for members to continue to hear the magical sounds of the Theatre Organ – Unit Orchestra.

Many music lovers who had heard Theatre Organ played in the Prince Edward, Lyceum, Capitol, State, & Roxy Cinemas - to name just some of the many installations around Sydney - wished to ensure that examples of Theatre Organ were preserved, restored and installed in venues suitable for concert performances.

Currently the NSW Division owns three Theatre Organs. A 2 manual 11 rank Wurlitzer (formerly Prince Edward Theatre) installed in Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville Road, Marrickville and a 3 manual 17 rank Wurlitzer (formerly Capitol Theatre) installed in the Orion Entertainment Centre, Beamish Street, Campsie. Both of these Theatre Organs have undergone significant restoration and the electronics have been modernised with computerised relay systems to give artists significant flexibility and reliability in setting up and playing music from all ages including modern day popular music. The third organ is a 2 manual 8 rank Christie (formerly Kings Theatre Gordon) which is in storage awaiting a suitable venue for installation.

Members and Our Activities

Members range from musicians to technicians to lovers of the Theatre Organ style of music and magical sounds capable of being played on these instruments. Members are entitled to discounted concert tickets for self or spouse, have the opportunity of playing both Wurlitzers on Members Playing days or evenings, attending home organ parties with the opportunity of playing a variety of electronic Theatre Organs as well as helping out with setting up concerts.

Membership provides an opportunity to participate in the running of the Society and receive the TOSA News 11 times a year

to keep you informed of Theatre Organ activities, concerts throughout Australia and overseas, and various web sites of interest to Theatre Organ music lovers. The purchase of a range of Theatre Organ recordings by Australian and overseas artists is available at concerts.

Disabled access is available at both the Orion Entertainment Centre and at Marrickville Town Hall (Marrickville Library on some web sites).

How To Join

If you enjoy great music played on the Unit Orchestra that is the Theatre Organ - then we would love to welcome you as a member because the Theatre Organ is indeed a 21st Century musical instrument with a unique range of musical tones and colours that can thrill all ages.

Club membership costs a modest \$30.00 a year for full single membership. Pensioner, Country, Interstate or Overseas membership is AUD \$20.00. Six month membership is available from January to the end of June at half the full rate. After 1st April the full year rate takes members through to the end of June the following year. Full details are on the Membership Application Form at the back of TOSA News.

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Deadline for each edition is the 12th of the previous month. Please send copy before then where possible.

Your input is valued. Email where possible by typing into your email program or send separate files for text in "word .doc" and in ".jpg" for pictures.

Please do not format as that step is made by the Creative Director.

Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.

President's Report

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I report to you on the Society's progress over the past year.

Membership has remained relatively static and we welcome those who joined throughout the year. However to grow we require a greater influx of new members. This is something to which we can all apply ourselves. A good way to introduce prospective members is by inviting relatives, friends and neighbours to avail of the introductory free concert and then suggest they become members.

Concerts have been of a high standard, both in the artists used and the actual production. The lighting and sound has been maintained at a high standard and the Committee continues to investigate and purchase suitable equipment to ensure the standard continues to improve. To those who have loaned equipment for use at concerts, our sincere thanks. Numbers attending have been, at times, disappointing and resulted in a financial loss in some instances. That said, we have returned a profit for the year and our financial position remains strong.

Home parties have continued, and our thanks go to those who have opened their homes and to those who have attended.

Following a suggestion by Peter Held at the last AGM, contact was made with the Christian Science church in Campsie and arrangements made for a trial social afternoon around their Hammond organ. The attendance was disappointing but it is proposed repeating the venture early in 2009.

The website continues to improve and our thanks go firstly to Ron Mosman for his efforts in upgrading what was, after all, a very pathetic site. Of more recent days, Roger Dunk has further upgraded the site and continues to work on it. Roger has provided this site to the Society free of charge and we express our deep gratitude for this.

The Promotions Sub-Committee ceased to function early in the year. The effort of the members of that group are much appreciated and it is now a case of building on the sterling work they commenced.

Restoration work has commenced on the Christie despite negotiations for a venue having stalled. The Committee continue to work on this and have certainly not given up hope of finding a suitable "home" for this instrument.

As with any Society, success is dependent on teamwork. And that teamwork is necessary from all members, be they elected to Committee or not. I wish to record my personal thanks, and I'm sure yours as well, to our Executive and Committee members, to all those who assist in the myriad ways at concerts, to those who work to get out TOSA News on a regular monthly basis, and to you our members for your support.

It is quite possible for this Society to go from strength to strength if we all play our part. Thank you for your continuing support.

Geoff Brimley
President

To watch out for..

Sunday 1st February, 2009 at 2:00pm
Australia's Popular Organist
John Atwell with the Enzo Toppano duo.
Orion Centre, Beamish Street Campsie.

The Orion Centre has disabled access directly from Beamish Street.

But wait, there's more!!

Considering a visit to the USA?

On the subject of A.T.O.S. Conventions, next year is planned for Cleveland, Ohio but 2010 will be in Seattle, Washington. Now would be a good time for T.O.S.A. members to start saving and planning to attend.

Rob Gliddon recommends this should be a great event, having attended both previous Conventions held in Seattle in 1971 and 1981.

Help Needed!

TOSA really needs willing and able members to set out chairs and tables at Marrickville Town Hall prior to concerts, and to put them away afterwards. Job may also include hanging window curtains and other interesting miscellaneous duties.

If you feel you could assist your Society in this way, please contact our Vice President, John Shaw on (02) 9759 5825.

Advertising Rates in TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Small bubble = \$11.00

Quarter Page = \$24.75

Half Page = \$49.50

Full Page = \$99.00

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

(All Advertising rates are payable in advance)

Members' Playing Events

A reminder that the Committee has tried to establish permanent times but that these can be cancelled at short notice if either venue receives a paying booking for our Thursday.

Unless otherwise stated, the Campsie afternoons are held on the second Thursday of each month at 1.30pm, and the Marrickville evenings are on the fourth Monday at 7.30pm.

To be sure that there is no last minute cancellation at the Orion, please ring Walter on 9716 0151. To be sure there are no last minute cancellations at Marrickville, please ring Neil on 9798 6742.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

cont'd..



The Rockettes high kick at Radio City Music Hall, Xmas 2007

Radio City Music Hall Continued

The following information is a continuation of our feature article from last month's issue about this magnificent venue in which a Wurlitzer Theatre Organ with dual ebony consoles is installed and still entertaining patrons in the 21st Century.

Continuing the outline of the complex as originally completed.



The Console

Rockettes

The most celebrated dancing troupe of modern times is the remarkable Rockette line of the Radio City Music Hall. The fame of these precision dancers who dance as one girl on the World's largest stage has spread to every corner of the globe. Although only 30 Rockettes appear on the stage at one time, there are actually 39 girls in the troupe. 9 of the 39 are always on vacation, alternating their rest periods with the girls appearing on the stage. A Rockette works three weeks and then gets a fourth week off with full pay. They come from all over the country and some girls begin their careers at sixteen during school vacations as summer replacements. The Rockettes routines are choreographed by the director of the troupe, Violet Holmes, and by Peter Gennaro, the famed choreographer, producer and dancer. Russel Markert, the originator of the troupe, retired in 1971.

Symphony Orchestra

The Music Hall Symphony Orchestra is almost as famous as the Rockettes as it is one of the oldest permanent symphony orchestras in America. All the music used is especially arranged and orchestrated by the Music Hall's own staff, and much of it is composed especially for its use. Copyists and music librarians work constantly in the music library to meet the demands of each new production.

Costume Department

The Radio City Music Hall has its own costume department.

Almost all of the costumes used in the stage productions are made in the theatre by this department. The head of the Costume Department has a costume card file containing over 8,000 costume sketches. More than 4,000 different patterns are on file as are 60,000 different samples of cloth. The largest number of costumes used in one show was 425 in a production of the ballet "Scheherazade."



The Dancing Girl

Rehearsal Halls

There are two rehearsal halls in the theatre, a large one and a small one. They are situated directly over the auditorium. The large rehearsal hall is approximately the same size as the stage of the theatre. The room is equipped with mirrors so that the dancers may watch themselves while rehearsing.

Sound Studio

A fully equipped sound studio, incorporating the most modern and complete techniques for sound reproduction, is located in the theatre building. The acoustically perfect studio is the source for recording and taping the Music Hall's theatrical sound effects and is also used for rehearsals of the Symphony Orchestra and vocal groups.

Personnel

There are approximately 400 persons employed in the Radio City Music Hall. This number includes the artists on the stage, the management, the operating section, etc., in fact everyone working in the theatre.



The Toy Soldiers

This concludes this feature article on the Radio City Music Hall, New York New York. Please watch for a new feature article series commencing in February 2009.



Ernie and Aye-Thidar get up close and personal with a Rockette

Concert & Membership Prices

The following TOSA concert ticket prices now apply:

	Australian Artists	Overseas Artists
Non-members	\$25.00	\$27.50
Non-member Pension	\$22.00	\$25.00
TOSA Members	\$20.00	\$20.00
Students 15-21yrs	\$10.00	\$10.00

Child under 15yrs accompanying an adult: FREE!

Annual Membership Fees are now:

\$30.00 for Full membership, and

\$20.00 for Concession, Country, Interstate & Overseas.

Membership enquiries Walter Pearce 9716 0151 membership@tosa.net.au

Associate Membership for a spouse/partner is an additional 50% only.

Theatre Organ as Modern Art?

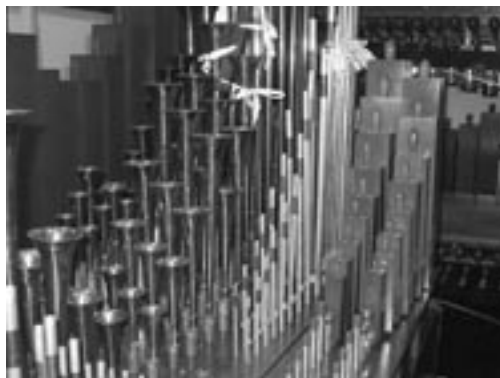
By John Weismantel

During a recent business trip I found myself with just sufficient time before my flight home to visit the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) on Brisbane's South Bank for a short concert. Entering the 300 seat Cinema 'A' brings a feeling of coziness from the abundance of warm wood colours. The existence of two metal grilles in the floor of the slightly raised stage area in front of the screen with a pool of light in between is the only suggestion of things to come.

As the house lights dimmed, the centre section of stage floor dropped then slid backwards followed a few seconds later by a magnificent polished wood 3-manual console rising some 6 metres from the basement with David Bailey firmly in control.



An extremely pleasant hour of music followed with a nice blend of show tunes displaying good tonal contrasts. It is patently obvious that this instrument has been carefully tailored to the size of the auditorium, with nice, crisp attack and, as would be expected, virtually no reverberation. Full organ was just that: full, rich sound, but not deafening. Those who remember and expect the sound of this organ as it was in the theatre might be disappointed, but this new environment dictated the changes. After all, the sound is subservient to the film and the organ was installed for that purpose. The sound reminded me of the best home/studio installations I have heard in the USA.



The 32' Diaphone extension is housed beneath the seating and produces a surprisingly smooth, but nonetheless denture-rattling sub-bass which David used judiciously ("Ol' Man River" from "Showboat" by Jerome Kern was a particular highlight for me). With the pipe chambers underneath the screen area speaking into upward curved chutes, the sound actually appears to emanate from each side of the screen with discernible stereo separation. One drawback of the intimacy of this installation is the audible thump from the air-driven combination pistons, but, let's face it, this is part of the historic accuracy of the instrument, along with the "safety-pin" combination setter board at the back of the console.

The main use of the GoMA organ is accompanying silent movies, a job which David likes, but he admits it brings a whole new set of challenges. Whatever is showing I highly recommend making the effort to hear this organ if you are in Brisbane. TOSA Queensland's web site tries to keep up-to-date information regarding coming events, so it would pay to get in touch with them before visiting if you anticipate hearing the Wurlitzer.

Is the Theatre Organ really Modern Art?

Yes... The Cinematheque exists to celebrate the moving image, and the organ's role is to reproduce and authenticate the atmospheric sound and light show which constitutes the silent film presentation.

Silent film is still being made... so it IS modern art!

I applaud the Gallery's choice to install this historic instrument and make its sounds available to a modern audience.

John Weismantel 4/11/08

Broadcast Details Sep 08 – Jan 09

"Colours of the King" 2MBS - FM 102.5

(program of the Organ Music Society of Sydney)
2nd Saturday of each month, 5pm till 6 pm

December 13

A concert recording made for 2MBS featuring Michael Deasey – formerly Organist and Choirmaster of St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney and now Director of Music and Precentor at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Bathurst.

Concert date 7th May 2006 – venue St Stephen's Anglican Church Penrith (Jackson organ of 1874, enlarged Fincham 1906, rebuilt Brown & Arkley 1977) – recording engineer Greg Ghalvalas.

Walond – Voluntary in G major
Stanley – Voluntary in C major
Buxtehude – Chorale Prelude "Now pray we the Holy Ghost"
Bach – Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor BWV 582
Gluck – In Paradise
Bonnet – Romance Sans Paroles
Owens – Chorale Prelude "Shall we gather at the river"
Bonnet – Ariel

January 10

A concert recording made for 2MBS featuring Angelo Castaldo, Organist and Choirmaster of Volto Santo's Sanctuary, Naples, Italy.

Concert date 7th April, 2006 – venue St Mark's Anglican Church Figtree (organ by Kinloch, 1845) – sound engineer Greg Ghalvalas.

Frescobaldi – Toccata Decima, Canzon dopo l'Epistola, Toccata per l'Elevatione, Bergamasca
Pergolesi – Sonata per cembalo o organo
Panerai – 3 movements from Sonata 85 da organo
Donizetti – Rondo
Buxtehude – Preludium from Te Deum
Walther – Corale e variazioni
WF Bach – Toccata

The Theatre Organ 2MBS - FM 102.5

3rd Saturday of each month, 6.30 – 7.00 pm

December 20

A program of march music

Coates – March – Oxford Street (Joseph Seal)
Bagley – National Emblem March (Russell Holmes)
Belton – Down the Mall (Sandy McPherson)
Johnson – The Waterloo March (Nigel Ogden)
Sousa – medley of popular marches (Reginald Dixon)
Strauss – Radetsky March (Tony Fenelon)
Teike – Old Comrades (Joseph Seal)

January 17

Strauss – Voices of Spring (Margaret Hall)
Ketelbey – In a Monastery Garden (Quentin Maclean)
Smetana – Dance of the Comedians (Jonas Nordwall)



Members' Gossip

Sometime "barrel-girl" at TOSA concerts, Kathryn Weismantel, and her sister Leanne, daughters of TOSA members John & Sharon, are in the Australian Girls' Choir (often referred to as the "QANTAS Choir" because of the well-known TV commercials featuring Peter Allen's "I Still Call Australia Home").

Kathryn was recently invited, along with 28 of her friends, to sing at the 40th birthday party for none other than Hugh Jackman, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Baz Luhrmann, Rove McManus & Cate Blanchette at the Royal Motor Yacht Club, Point Piper. Parents and sister weren't so fortunate, having to make do with fish'n'chips at the Watson's Bay Hotel. Should we return the favour and invite Hugh to a TOSA function?

As if this wasn't enough Kathryn and two school friends whipped up an Andrews Sisters routine and wowed the Ryde Schools' Spectacular at the Sydney Opera House with "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" last October.

The Editor hears rumours that TOSA Member and past Committeeman Tom Barber has been winning medals running marathons. Well done Tom! (*stay tuned for more..*)

Got any feelgood gossip to share with other members? Drop a line to the editor. These pages are waiting!

DAVID PARSONS at EPPING.....

Rod Blackmore

Friday 6th November saw an audience of about 40 hear David Parsons playing the Christie organ at Epping Baptist Church. David said it was maybe 4 or 5 years since he last played there. The occasion was basically a church function, commencing at 1.30pm after lunch in the hall, but there was a sprinkling of TOSA people there too.

The mini-concert was in David's unique style of presenting music that is well-known to everyone. The organ was in good form, having been tuned only the day before. Individual voices, especially the reeds – trumpet, tuba, clarinet – stood out plainly.

David's programme consisted of:

I got Rhythm; Spanish dance; medley from 'My Fair Lady'; Bird Songs at Eventide & A Nightingale sang in Berkley Square; Can Can; You raised me up; Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (Nabucco); Die Fledermaus overture; Solveig's Song and Anitra's Dance (Peer Gynt); Strange Music (Song of Norway); The Impossible Dream (Man of La Mancha); Cwm Rhondda; ending with the Liberty Bell march.

A varied offering bound to please his audience, and this is an organ that everyone should take the opportunity of hearing.

Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc. Secretary's Report 2008

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you all for coming to the AGM.

With all the hard work and decisions that went into last year's planning meeting, it has enabled us to have a very productive and eventful 2008.

The highlight has been the recent birthday celebrations of both organs and with careful planning both concerts were a success. A significant development has been the creation of a new TOSA website at tosa.net. Many thanks should be given to the members concerned for their hard work in setting up and continued development of the site.

Many of us visited the new Wesley Centre in July to inspect and play the Christie Organ. It was a lovely venue and we hope to re-visit again in the winter of next year.

We have also had an initial visit to a church hall in Campsie with an idea of having a social occasion on Saturday afternoons. It could eventuate into a club like venue on a monthly basis.

We had a successful auction where a model of the Marrickville organ was won and proceeds were donated to the Christie organ restoration fund. That restoration has now started. Speaking of Marrickville, the organ staircase has been re-carpeted after 40 years of wear and tear.

On the bigger picture a President's forum is now in place where every 6 months or so, President's from every state meet to discuss important issues. We try and coincide the dates with important functions so hopefully everybody can be present.

Adelaide will be holding a Theatre Organ Convention next Easter and all members are invited to attend.

We have a new Editor for TOSA NEWS – Ernie Vale and we thank our previous editor Colin Groves for the years of work involved in producing the magazine.

On behalf of the Committee I would like to pass on my sincere condolences to the families and friends of TOSA members who have passed away since last year.

Finally, I would like to give my grateful thanks to all the volunteers for their work and support over the year. It is very much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted

Deirdre McMullan



Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc. Treasurer's Report

The financial year just ended shows an improvement in the accounts. This was largely due to a combination of items.

Because of a reduction in the number of concerts staged through the year, income from such items as ticket sales, sales of recordings, afternoon teas and candy bar items and raffle proceeds was down. However this was offset by less expenditure on artist's fees and expenses, hire of venues and equipment, and organ maintenance. In addition there was an increase in donations received and a decrease in insurance, leasing charges and printing, stationery, postage and telephone costs. Generally most other accounts were similar to last year. Details follow with the 2007 figures shown in brackets for comparison:-

Profit from sale of recordings, afternoon teas and candy bar was \$1,985 (\$2,211); total income including this profit \$43,969 ((\$51,886); total expenditure \$34,845 (\$45,517); operating profit \$9,124 (\$6,369; Retained Profits (\$56,283 (\$47,159).

I would like to thank Geoff Brimley for his invaluable assistance in producing the end of financial year documents. Also TOSA's thanks go to our Auditors, Rod Blackmore and Robert Huthnance for their assistance and professional guidance.

A complete copy of the financial report was submitted to the Annual General Meeting on 16th November. Members who would like to receive a full copy of the audited accounts should contact the Treasurer.

Kath Harding



HAPPENINGS IN THE ORGAN WORLD

From The Theatre Organ Club "News North"

The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust (LTOT) has sold the four manual Wurlitzer originally in the Gaumont Theatre, Manchester. Before taking this action, members were invited to vote on the proposal, and 85% were agreeable. It has already been moved to its new home, Folly Farm Adventure Park, near Kilgetty (North of Tenby) in South Wales, where it is intended to be featured twice daily, seven days per week, and hopefully will be installed in time for the opening next spring. Folly Farm provides interests for the whole family, with everything from animals to vintage fairground rides, and receives approximately 440,000 visitors per year, suggesting that it will be an ideal home for the organ. TOC member Ben Snowden is in charge of the reinstallation, and it is understood that the present and any future contracts will contain a clause that the organ cannot be broken up.

While some people may object and others saddened by the organ's disappearance from the North of England, the indications are that it will at long last be given a new lease of life in what appears to be an ideal location. This is surely preferable to more years in storage, and gradual deterioration. Over the years, the LTOT have inspected over 140 venues, some of them hopeful at first sight, but there were many problems to cause rejection, mainly the absence of immediately adjoining space for conversion into organ chambers and blower room.

A LOST RUTT REDISCOVERED

On 21 September, some Southern members of the Theatre Organ Club (TOC) had the interesting experience of meeting up with a Rutt cinema organ which, for many years, was thought lost. It is one of two cinema organs built by the firm of R. Spurden Rutt & Co. in 1928, one of them at the Palace, Slough (later rebuilt in a church at Gerrards Cross), and the other at the Super Cinema, Oxford. Due to the arrival of sound films, it was used only until 1932, when the chamber opening was bricked up and the console was boxed in beneath the stage. There it

remained until 1978, when it was bought by someone in Alton, Hants, but in 1987 it was again for sale, and purchased by Peter Webb, who installed it in a converted barn at West End near Woking.

At some time during the above period, the late Bill Walker gave assistance and worked on the rather delapidated console, replacing what remained of the Rutt stopkeys with Compton units. The console is in line with the 'key desks' of small organs made at that time by Compton, Christie and Wurlitzer, which were normally placed within the orchestra enclosures. Prior to the recent visit Frank Fowler and a few volunteers spent time at Rounce Farm (its present home) sorting out the organ's problems, and discovering that most of them were merely due to lack of use. It was, of course, in need of tuning, but at the meeting it gave a good account of itself in the hands of Paul Morris and Frank Fowler, who produced very pleasing sounds. Mr. Webb is hoping that it will be played more in the future, particularly as there are people willing to care for it.

The Rutt name may be unfamiliar to some readers, as when Mr. Rutt retired at the end of 1958 the firm ceased to exist, its work being transferred to J.W. Walker & Sons. Only fifteen months later he died at the age of 79. At the age of 14, Robert Spurden Rutt was articled to the organ builder Kirkland, gradually learning the art of making organ components and also voicing. He was also an inventive genius and, still in his teens, he constructed a two manual organ with direct electric action in his uncle's home. In 1899 he bravely decided to branch out on his own, but work was not easy to find, and Robert Hope-Jones helped him through a bad time by entrusting him with the manufacture of consoles and soundboards for his organs. Rutt risked taking a stand for three small organs at the 1903 Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace, London, but proved to be his salvation, as by 1914 around eighty organs had been built. One of their largest jobs was rebuilding and enlarging the organ in Temple Church, London, which was to be destroyed during the war.

Throughout both World Wars he worked for the Air Ministry, inventing and producing many different components for fitting to aircraft and tanks. *cont'd on page 18 ...*

Church and concert organs (some of them quite famous) always provided the main work for the firm, but in 1928 the demand for unit cinema organs made Mr Rutt decide to try his hand. He produced specifications for organs as small as two manuals, three units (Model A), Model C being two manuals, six units and Model E three manuals, eight units, with larger sizes if required. The two instruments mentioned above were Model C, and a three manual decorated console was also built for exhibition, but it was later dismantled when it seemed that the cinema organ venture was unsuccessful.

However, in 1934 the firm did receive instructions to build another six unit organ, but with three manuals (the middle one a coupler) and an illuminated console for the small Regal Cinema at Highams Park, which opened in 1935. Happily, it was saved and is now to be seen and heard at the St. Albans Organ Museum, enabling people to appreciate its pleasing tones. And with the Rounce Farm organ now discovered, it is good to know that two of the three cinema organs bearing the Rutt name are still alive and well.

The New Brentford Musical Museum London UK

This new purpose-built museum (funded by a lottery grant) was officially opened on 9 June 2008. The organ's reopening took place on Saturday 25 October with special guest organists Richard Hills and David Shepherd featured. Richard Cole, who has been much involved in the entire project and in the reinstallation of the Wurlitzer, was in charge of proceedings, and those attending the event (which was a sell out) were impressed by the fine job he has done.

It was a special moment when, in the upstairs auditorium, the Wurlitzer console started to rise slowly on its lift, the illuminated sides glowing just as they used to do at the Regal, Kingston upon Thames. To a large extent its unique sound remains (as it did at the old museum), although it is agreed that a little work remains to be done in certain areas, as is often the case. What is evident is that this is a highly

successful reinstallation which is sure to be a focal point at the museum, and maybe those of us who cannot make a personal visit will be rewarded by a recording to add to those made in its two previous homes. What a pity it is that Joseph Seal, who produced such wonderful sounds on the organ in those former homes, is no longer with us to renew acquaintance with his old friend as it enters a new phase of life.

(I discovered this new musical museum on the COS UK web site whilst on holiday in London and seeing the very modern building decided I should investigate. I went to the Musical Museum on the day of the concert and was most impressed with the whole facility. I was fortunate enough to hear Richard Cole play the Wurlitzer in the afternoon prior to the re-opening concert and it indeed sounds very good in its new location. More information on Brentford Musical Museum in future issues of TOSA News - Editor).



Hope you all enjoyed the excellent review of Richard Hills Concert by Dr John Batts in the November issue of TOSA News. Many thanks again John. (Editor)

Organist Richard Hills in Conversation.

Following his wonderful public performance on the Wurlitzer of Marrickville Town Hall for TOSA(NSW) in late August, 2008, Richard was kind enough to allow an interview with John S. Batts on behalf of TOSA and RNB's radio presentation "Theatre Organ Magic."

Notes: Pauses not omissions are marked by three dots. Additions in square brackets are to help place the references.

JSB: I am slightly curious obviously about the way in which you were attracted to the theatre organ ... one visit to Thursford [a Mechanical Museum in Norfolk, England] did it according to this afternoon's programme?



RH: Very much so, yes.

JSB: It's extraordinary. I grew up with organs in the cinemas in England and they were on radio, a handful of broadcasts every week, so it was very different.

RH: I think I was just very much into that style of music to start with. I was listening to records at my grandparents when I was younger, so I was aware of that style of music. We used to go around to lots of Steam Fairs that they have in England. And of course I plonked myself in front of all the show-biz organs, in front of a big Marangi [?] or something ... I just used to enjoy hearing that kind of music played on the organ. And we had a family holiday in Norfolk and saw brochures for Thursford. And, of course, being a Museum of Steam and Fairground Organs we thought "let's go!" So I turned up and was confronted with a Wurlitzer [ex-Paramount, Leeds].

JSB: The old Newcastle Paramount?

RH: Leeds, Paramount.

JSB: I sat at that one when it had just been sold. Many years ago I was on sabbatical, on leave at the University of Hull, but they would not turn it on because it had been sold! [laughter].

RH: A missed opportunity! I was 7 at the time, and was at quite a good age to be interested.

JSB: You'd just started, obviously, on the piano.

RH: I'd never been aware. I was playing piano and organ at that point anyway, but was not aware you could make such sounds on an organ. But that one, being such a good Wurlitzer ... the ground shook and I was hooked for ever.

JSB: Wow! I want to say that there's sort of pattern here. I see that you were at King's School in Rochester [Kent, England]. Wasn't [organist] George Blackmore there as well, and at The Majestic Cinema, if it still stands?

RH: He was. The Majestic doesn't stand, I'm afraid. It's gone now. It's now luxury apartments.

JSB: But the Compton survives?

RH: The Compton does survive, yes. It's now in Holland. And I played it earlier this year, in fact, for the first time. Yes, George

was at King's Rochester. I never met him unfortunately. But his teacher was Percy Whitlock ...

JSB: Pavilion, Bournemouth.

RH: ... One of my very favourite composers for the organ. So I wish I had met him [GB] and picked his brain.

JSB: You probably play ... is it called The Plymouth Suite [Whitlock], for example? And do you tuck in pieces of classical music occasionally in your programming?

RH: Not on the theatre organ as a rule. People do ask me from time to time if I would include something. The answer usually is no, for a number of reasons. Mainly because I think that the majority of theatre organs are not adequate vehicles for the performance of the classical literature. You need a proper diapason chorus and a set of reeds per manual ... that kind of thing, to do it with any kind of dignity. As you know, most theatre organs have "a" diapason, two if you are lucky, and not exactly extended up above 4-foot pitch and that's not really workable. And the other thing is that I tend to get into a mind-set when I'm playing a concert like this.



JSB: I was wondering about that.

RH: There's a flow and feel about how and where the programme is going. And I find it quite disruptive, mentally, suddenly to slip into the other style of playing. The bottom

line is that I don't enjoy really playing classical music on the theatre organ.

JSB: Well, of course you have other outlets, anyway, doing a bit of concertising and so it helps. I think that Lew still does a little bit of this in Phoenix [Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa, Arizona] and gives the odd straight [classical] piece an airing.

RH: But they have the facility there to play a lot of that stuff convincingly. The organ has nearly 80-ranks of pipes. A lot of solid diapason work, a lot of good strings and flutes ... it makes a better job of classical music on an instrument with that kind of resource.

JSB: But you could have dashed off Percy Whitlock's "Scherzo," I'm sure, here in two minutes.

RH: Well, probably yes. But if you're talking about that piece you are relying on two flutes in the organ, the Tibia and the Concert Flute. Quite often, of course, Tibias are not exactly steady off-wind [?tremis], because they are designed to shake.

JSB: That's right.

RH: So you have to be very careful, I think, to do the music justice. Just as you do the other way round, and be very selective when playing theatrical music or light music on the church organ.

JSB: Which is not always the case, I understand!

RH: No ... I've heard some pretty dreadful renditions of things that really shouldn't have been played on church instruments. "The Dambusters March" [Eric Coates] seems to be a huge favourite at the minute.

JSB: Yes, at Portsmouth Cathedral or somewhere, it was on The Organist Entertains ... Salisbury Cathedral I think?

RH: What would you want to play "The Dambusters March" on Salisbury Cathedral for?

JSB: Like the "Poor People of Paris" played by Robin Richmond on the [Royal] Albert Hall organ!

RH: With his tongue firmly in his cheek, sometimes. People who decide to slip in a bit of [music by composer] Eric Coates think they are being terribly clever, whereas in fact they do not really know anything about the genre — and do not perform it all that convincingly.

JSB: I thought you paid a great deal of attention to [shaping of] the programming, I mean, not least, looking at something like this for Graduation, your CD [RH's CD recorded at the Dickinson HS Kimball].

RH: Oh yes, recordings. Usually thought-provoking processes to get a balance because, of course, I like to include some things that, maybe, I wouldn't include in concert programmes — some music, for example, which is much more off the beaten track.

JSB: We heard a couple of things this afternoon, though, from Graduation which was interesting for me, not least because I have a radio programme which I may not have explained to you so I have played a couple of tracks from this already. When you are programming, as today, do you think of a piano novelty, a Latin item, ballads, film music, and you categorise them in that way?

RH: Yes, exactly. It's always ... ballads and I try to treat each half of the programme as a separate unit with an opening item, usually something fun or a little bit quirky to end the first half. Over the years I have worked out a flow of what seems to work well, following up with a ballad, then going into a selection, just to keep as much a flow in terms of the genre as much as in terms of the actual sounds you make on the organ.

JSB: You ended the first half precisely on 3.00 p.m. today. I don't know if you were aware of that, but I thought "what exquisite timing!" A television producer would have been terribly impressed.

The other month I played "Smash and Grab" [a track on RH's Graduation] and the [composer] Jimmy Leach is THE Jimmy Leach of Organoleans fame [English broadcasting organist of yesteryear]?

RH: Yes, Jimmy Leach and his Organoleans.

JSB: ... Music While You Work [long-running twice-daily programme on the BBC] and all that! Did he compose anything else?

RH: I'm sure he did.

JSB: I had never heard of anything by him until I encountered this.

RH: He would have been one of those performers of the day who had another outlet in composition.

JSB: I may have mentioned the TOSA Composition Competition to you. If you wanted to come up with "The Orion Fantasy" or whatever, please feel free to do it on the aeroplane [returning to the UK] and sketch it out and we could even extend our closing deadline by a week! [An offer not taken up!]

Our members would have been fascinated by your technique, I'm sure. Your piston settings, for example; I presume that you do put in a kind of "terracing" somewhere, such as 1 to 5 on the Accompaniment. Apart from that did you do any special settings on whatever channels you were using?

RH: I tend to limit myself to one level. Nothing desperately special! There are one or two sounds that I especially enjoy making. Yes, most players I'm sure have a basic crescendo set-up from 1 to 5. That's a good starting point, I always think, for the basic shaping that you need, and then after that basic crescendo is set, I'll go into the more basic sounds.

JSB: I did have a glance at one channel set-up and, strangely enough, didn't find rhythmic stuff where you already have the Cymbal and Chinese Block (or whatever) on the accompaniment. And on the other hand, you were doing a lot of hand-registering.

RH: The pistons are only the starting point — when you need quick dynamic changes and the very basic gradations, but unless you set 20 pistons very quiet to very loud, it's much easier to start with a basic piston, then tweak it by hand if your going to make it a very subtle dynamic change. Because, otherwise, if you just flick through 1 to 5, it can be quite clunky. At some point a Tibia will come on, at some point a big reed is going to come on, and so, unless you set millions and millions of pistons and set everything on, adding one stop at a time. What I usually do is just have some basic milestones. I know that 4' Strings are going to come on on the [piston] 3, for

example, and I know that the Post-Horn is going to be on number 5. If I want something in between numbers 4 and 5 well then I'll hit No.5 and take the Post-Horn off by hand.

[to be continued next time.]

Tony Fenelon



Tony has been regularly featured in the New Year's Eve and Best of British concert seasons at the Melbourne Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival Theatre and Geelong Art Centres.

Tony's insatiable interest in lighter music and a love of the majestic sound of the theatre pipe organ led to his "other" career, leading to his appointment in 1965 as the resident organist at Melbourne's then prestigious Regent Theatre. Tony made his first theatre pipe organ tour of the United States back in 1969, and has returned at least 16 times to perform both on theatre organ and piano, as well as on Roland's Atelier range of organs. He has performed at some of the most prestigious theatre organ venues in the U.S. including, the Oakland Paramount, the Ohio Theatre, Columbus, San Sylmar, the Sanfilippo residence, the Orpheum Phoenix and the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, to mention a few.

In 1999, Tony returned to his old stamping ground to be featured in the Inaugural Concert of the Regent Theatre's new Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. This concert was an overwhelming success, drawing an unprecedented record attendance since the civic reopening of the Regent. In February this year, by popular demand, Tony was invited back to do a repeat concert.

Now an internationally acclaimed artist,

Tony has completed over twenty major concert tours overseas, performing on pipe organ and piano. Since 1995, Tony's association with the Roland group of companies has seen him performing concerts throughout Australia, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom Canada Hong Kong and Taiwan on Roland's extensive range of contemporary keyboard instruments. He has been invited 3 times to represent Australia in Roland's Organ Power Concert at the Karin and Richard Carpenter Auditorium at Anaheim, USA.

In his concerts, Tony strives to provide a tasteful balance between popular tunes and light classics and includes music from the films, stage shows, jazz, and great standards. As the piano has always been his first love, his extensive repertoire of piano classics now forms an increasingly large proportion of his concerts, a feature widely appreciated by his audiences and captured in his recently recorded CD "Collections".

Since 1986, Tony and his wife Noella have been able to enjoy the more exotic fruits of music as Tony entertains guests on board luxury cruise ships at some of the world's most exciting locations. Their travels have taken them from Alaska to French Polynesia, Norway, the British Isles, Bali and the South Pacific, Italy, Spain and Africa, with Tony as a featured artist on piano and orchestral keyboards.

A man with an insatiable appetite for music, Tony's dedication and energy are the drive behind his constant quest for new ideas and musical horizons.

Sunday 14th December at 2:00pm

Marrickville Town Hall

Cnr Petersham Rd & Marrickville Rd

Marrickville

Next to the Fire Station

All welcome and bring your friends!