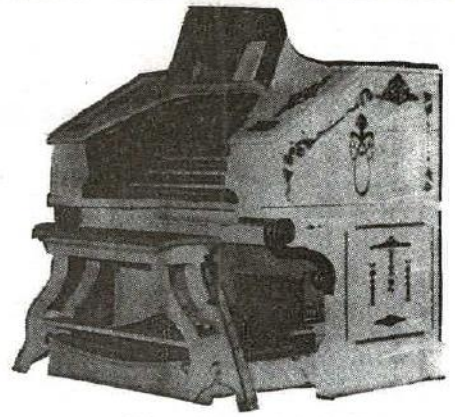




Marrickville Town Hall



Orion Centre Campsie

MAY 1989

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**IT'S  
TIME!**

**Don't Forget to  
Renew Your  
MEMBERSHIP**

Volume 28  
Issue 5  
Price \$1.00

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society  
of Australia (N.S.W. Division) Inc  
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**IMPORTANT - ALL MEMBERS AND INTERSTATE DIVISIONS AND OVERSEAS POINTS**

**PLEASE NOTE THE NEW ADDRESS FOR THE SOCIETY**

**Address all correspondence to:-**

The Secretary,  
T.O.S.A. (N.S.W. Division) Inc.  
P.O. Box C462, CLARENCE STREET, SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000

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Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the Committee or Editor.



# CALENDAR

MAY

- Wednesday 3 7.30pm **COMMITTEE MEETING**
- Tuesday 9 8.00pm **MEMBERS MEETING & CLUB NIGHT**  
Orion Centre, Beamish Street, CAMPSIE

JUNE

- Wednesday 7 7.30pm **COMMITTEE MEETING**
- Sunday 18 2.00pm **FREE CONCERT**  
Marrickville Town Hall  
Further details next month  
- Please note change of date from that previously  
advised
- Friday 30 **1988/89 membership expires**  
- renewal form in this issue

JULY

- Wednesday 5 7.30pm **COMMITTEE MEETING**
- Sunday 16 2.00pm **JONAS NORDWALL from the USA**  
Orion Centre, Beamish Street, CAMPSIE  
Adults \$10 Members & concessions \$8  
Bookings open shortly.

AUGUST

- Wednesday 2 7.30 **COMMITTEE MEETING**
- Sunday 20 2.00pm John Van Kleef in Concert  
Marrickville Town Hall

**DON'T FORGET "THEATRE ORGAN HIGHLIGHTS" - 2CBA FM EVERY  
MONDAY EVENING AT 9.00PM**

### CORRECTION

In the last issue of TOSA NEWS an obituary appeared for the late Joh Congert. Unfortunately Joh's name was misspelled and this error is regretted.

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### MEMBER'S FOR SALE COLUMN

**1904 Edison "Standard Cylinder Gramophone".** This model has the much sought after dual speed feature. The machine is in very good but unrestored condition. Working well. \$800 including cylinders.

Also a **1930 H.M.V. Portable Gramophone** (largest model). Polished wood case with chrome fittings. A rare and desirable machine, formerly in an English museum. \$400 including some 78rpm records.

For further details on either of the above gramophones contact Nick Lang on 579-5790.

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### FOR SALE - HAMMOND ELEGANTE

This two manual (61 notes) and detachable 25 note pedal board is, of course, the top model of the Hammond Range. This organ is in excellent condition and is also a very beautiful piece of furniture. To own this magnificent organ all you will have to pay is \$9500 ono. Phone Ted Mackness on (02) 523 2586 for more details.

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE

Included in this issue is a renewal form for subscriptions which are due for renewal on 30 June for most members. Please ensure that the form is returned to the secretary with your payment. Failure to return the form will result in delays in processing your renewal. As you can imagine, with some 700 members all renewing in the space of 2 months, a large volume of paper work is generated. Your assistance will be appreciated. Your committee has been able to keep most subs at the same level as last year which is no mean feat when one considers the effects of inflation. However, Overseas members will find that due to increased postage

rates, subs have had to be increased. We have however given our overseas members the option of receiving TOSA NEWS by Surface mail or by Airmail. It is hoped that all members will renew promptly so as to regain continuity in their membership.

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### ANOTHER COMMITTEE VACANCY FILLED

One more committee vacancy has been filled with the elevation of Peter Bidecoppo to the position of Assistant Secretary and the subsequent election to committee of Euncie Palmer. Euncie has, for many years now, worked behind the scenes for the betterment of the society. It is great to see her taking a fuller and more active role in the life of TOSA.

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### CAPITOL THEATRE ORGAN STOP TAB KEY RINGS

Members have the opportunity of purchasing a lasting and useful souvenir of the Capitol Theatre WurliTzer Organ. Reproduced below is the inset card included with each key ring. The tabs have been polished and come complete with a split ring for all your keys. They will be available at all concerts until sold out at only \$10.00.

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### WURLITZER STOP TAB

This original WurliTzer Stop Tab came from the console of the 3 manual 15 rank organ built in the North Tonawanda factory and shipped to Australia for installation in the majestic atmospheric Capitol Theatre in Sydney's Haymarket area. The organ was opened in 1928 by Fred Scholl. The New South Wales Division of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia purchased the organ in 1972 and removed it from the theatre. The organ underwent a complete rebuild during 1987-88 and opened in the Orion Centre, Campsie on October 1st 1988. All of these original tabs were replaced with new ones due to an enlarged specification.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOME ORGAN PARTIES

Dear Sir

I am writing to express my disappointment with the lack of attendance of TOSA members at the recently held Home Organ Party at Mangrove Mountain on the Central Coast.

Paul and Mary Luci kindly opened their home and facilities and went to a lot of trouble to prepare for this event.

It is a bad reflection on the society with such a large membership that only six members attended and that advantage was not taken of such a delightful day.

I should like to think that any future events of this kind will be treated with greater enthusiasm.

Ron Ivin.

**Editors Note:** I and the committee would be interested to hear from members as to their thoughts on Home Organ Parties. Some years ago these events were very popular - why has this popularity waned? What suggestions have you for making these events successful and enjoyable for many of the members?

A PAT ON THE BACK

Dear Sir

I was very pleased to receive my copy of TOSA News today, and would like to compliment the society upon it's very fine magazine - I do enjoy reading it every month.

I have been a member of the Society for only a short period, having only had the pleasure of being present at the big function [opening of the Orion Centre WurliT-zer] last year, but hope to enjoy more this year.

I was very sad indeed to read the announcement of the death of Eric Smith and thought you might be interested in his introduction to the organ. For a number

of years I was organist and Choir Mistress at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Dulwich Hill - with its very lovely pipe organ. At that time - possibly 1940 or so, I had a very good choir with lovely boy sopranos, amongst whom was Eric Smith - he would have been about 12-ish with a lovely boy soprano voice. He was greatly interested in the organ, being a good pianist at the time, and I encouraged him by teaching him some of the rudiments of the pipe organ - he had his first lessons from me (complimentary) and was soon able to handle the organ - in fact, I was able to train him to play for practice at times giving me the opportunity to conduct. He was a very quiet and charming lad, loved by all who knew him and it was not long before he came a pupil of the Cathedral Organist and thus his career as an organist was established. Although I lost touch with him, I always followed his progress from church to church - he truly did make a name for himself as an accomplished organist.

I felt very sad when reading of his death today, and I possibly would not have known about it had it not been for your TOSA News.

I am looking forward to the next programme on the 23rd April, with, I hope, many more to follow this year.

Edna Gibbins.

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DON'T FORGET

COMING SOON TO THE ORION CENTRE

**JONAS NORDWALL**

direct from the USA

**SUNDAY, 16th JULY 1989 AT 2.00pm**

TICKETS ON SALE SOON

Our 1989 National Touring Artist

**EPPING ORGAN UPDATE**

It's been quite some time since any word has been given on the latest goings on with the Christie Unit Organ at the Epping Baptist Church. When the instrument was undergoing redesign and rebuilding, it was decided that the specification would call for 2-manuals & 9 ranks. The solo chamber would contain the Tibia, Tuba and Open Diapason ranks plus the Glockenspiel and Chimes. The main chamber to house the Violin, Celeste, No. 2 Diapason, Concert Flute and Clarinet with provision for a Trumpet rank at a later date.

We're pleased to report that the Trumpet rank is now in and playing thanks mainly due to our good friends and longtime overseas members Russ and JoAnn Evans of Seattle who located a suitable set of pipes for us in, of all places, Phoenix, Arizona. The trumpet rank sounds quite magnificent, not only as a solo sound but also topping off the fuller organ sounds. The Evans, having heard the instrument during the opening recital, decided that the only sound missing for this size theatre organ was a Vox Humana rank. This gap has been filled with the kind donation of same by the Evans. This rank has just, in the last few weeks, been commissioned in time for Russ & JoAnn's recent visit to Sydney.

The Xylophone (which has been operable for some time) plus the metal bar Harp which will be operating within the next few weeks complete the tonal scheme - well almost... The one thing that appears to be missing is the toy counter, but that too is up in the chambers just awaiting connection. The toy counter was built up by the work-team and represents all that will ever be required in way of non-tonal percussions in this particular location. As one would expect there has been no provision made for silent movie type sound effects.

**ANOTHER ENJOYABLE****'EPPING' CONCERT**

**SUNDAY MAY 21st**  
**2.30pm**  
 with

**CLIFF BINGHAM & JOHN CRAWFORD**

**THEATRE ORGANS IN FILMS**

Recently, the old 1947 film "Brief Encounter", based on a one act play of Noel Coward's "Still Life", was aired by Bill Colins. There was a moment of interest in cinema organs. Trevor Howard and Celia Johnson, who are meeting furtively, sneak off to the local cinema, and at interval after the slides have been shown there emerges from the pit a three manual Wurlitzer Pipe Organ. It looked like a Ramsey Special, more manuals than stops. However the cinema was not named, and it would have been interesting to know where it was located. This is the second film known by the writer to have had a cinema organ in it. There was screened somewhere in the Middle East, Lebanon or Palestine, an English film in which the hero, a cinema organist (in uniform) was seen playing a theatre organ. But the name of the star and film has been obliterated from memory by time.

Also recalled are two short films, screened at the Savoy Theatre in Bligh Street in 1938, of Jesse and Helen Crawford playing together on the Studio Wurlitzer of 27 ranks, located in the Paramount Theatre, New York. It had back-to-back consoles of four manuals each which were not horseshoe shaped but each side similar to church style with stop tabs over the top manual.

It is surprising that only one organ duet recording by this happily married couple was ever released in Australia, though it is suspected that in many of his recordings he was discreetly assisted at certain portions by his wife, but this was never acknowledged.

Does anyone else remember any other cases of theatre organs being seen in films?

R J Roberts

**DON'T FORGET "THEATRE ORGAN  
 HIGHLIGHTS" - 2CBA FM EVERY  
 MONDAY EVENING AT 9.00PM**

### CONCERT REVIEW - 'THE MESSIAH'

A unique, and quite possibly a musically historic event, was organised by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW). Handel's oratorio, 'Messiah', was performed at the Orion Centre in Campsie on March 17th, 1989. It was sung by the Gallery Singers, augmented with associates for this performance, and was conducted by Kenneth Willy with soloists Sandra Partridge (soprano), Rebecca Gale (contralto), Gregory Brown (tenor) and Leslie MacLeod-Miller (bass). The chorus and soloists were supported by David Drury, the Principal Organist of Christ Church St. Laurence in George Street, Sydney.

The oratorio was sung by a small choir, something that happens far too infrequently. For the Messiah is mostly sung by choirs far bigger than Handel intended. On this occasion the accompaniment was provided not by a small orchestra but by the 3 manual 17 rank WurliTzer Pipe Organ of the centre, probably the first time in Sydney that the Messiah has been supported by a theatre organ. But, there have been other precedents in England. Reginald Dixon A.R.C.M. used to accompany Messiah on the organ in the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool each year.

This Messiah at Campsie was appropriately performed shortly before Easter, for it was so in Handel's time, being done during the Lenten season. But custom now determines that it be presented in December. It is also noted that this work was performed in three sections as Handel desired. Another plus was the use of the Watkins Shaw Edition and not the Prout with its Mozart accretions.

The Gallery singers and their associates and the soloists are all young members of a choir that proved itself a very disciplined body, compact and steady. It brought light and shade, good phrasing, firm attack with excellent spirit encapsulating to the right degree the proper emotional content in the major choruses as in "Thus Said the Lord", the thrust given to "And He Shall Purify", and the swiftly flowing "For Unto Us a Child is Born" in which the soprano section were particularly fine. The weight of a big choir was not missed in the triumphal Hallelujah Chorus, so exuberant and exhilarating, a wonderful climax to the end of the section, a real cry of jubilation.

Of the soloists, the soprano and contralto, both of whom come from the same Conservatorium Opera School, gave fairly good account of themselves within their range and capabilities. Sandra Partridge showed fine instinct in her solos, of which two of

the very best were "There Were Shepherds Abiding" and her marvellous "Rejoice Greatly". The latter was sung very brightly and in a brisk tempo. For a moment it seemed as though it was the 12/8 version, so splendid was its urgent pace, with such spring to its rhythm, but it was really the initial Handelian version in 4/4 without ornamentation or other baroque features. Miss Partridge's singing was flecked with an abounding sense of joy and anticipation in extremely good voice. How seraphic was the floating line of her voice in the air, "How beautiful are the feet".

Contralto Rebecca Gale possesses a most promising alto voice having rich qualities, which in time will be further developed as will also the fine soprano voice of Sandra Partridge. Rebecca Gale was confident and assured in bringing "Good Tidings to Zion" in a controlled and illuminating voice heard to great advantage in the gentle "He Shall Feed his Flock".

The tenor Greg Brown and the bass Leslie MacLeod-Miller fulfilled the task of singing their respective parts competently, but neither of them had that commanding touch so essential in Handel's oratorios. They were keen, singing with care although without inspirational drive. Mr MacLeod-Miller had more success than the tenor, he has a definite sense of the dramatic, evidenced quite clearly in "Thus Said the Lord of Hosts" and the recitative "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth" and the air "The People that Walked in Darkness".

Tenor Greg Brown started tentatively with "Comfort Ye My People" and as he progressed became more at ease, but it was not until Part Two that he got into his stride with the Recitative and air "He That Dwelleth" and "Thou Shalt Break Them".

As conductor, Kenneth Willy kept the choir well in hand, conducting with a good clear beat without frills, in the process giving us a Messiah to remember.

It might have been expected for David Drury to attempt on the organ a kind of orchestral accompaniment for the choir, playing on what was originally called the Hope Jones Unit Orchestra and enhanced by WurliTzer, capable of providing something of a substitute for the normal orchestra. Such an attempt might have proved interesting and illuminating. But since this was the first occasion on which Mr Drury had been near such an instrument, it was only natural that he turned the WurliTzer inside out to find within its specification an organ with altogether a different sound it has normally as a cinema organ. The result was a great surprise and quite unexpected, although Dennis James allowed us a glimpse of its potential as a romantic pipe organ in a Franckish Allegro written by a theatre organ colleague.

Drury went even further, he explored the organ and came up with registrations suggestive of a small organ with tonal qualities suggestive of the baroque with the use of flues, strings and some small reeds and an occasional use of stops like the Post Horn. He kept the tonal pattern small scale, except at climaxes where he made use of a 16' pedal reed sparingly. He did not appear to use the tibias. It was noticeable that he rarely touched a stop key, mainly relying on his combination pistons. He seldom used the swell pedals to make a crescendo. His accompaniment was always discreet, never covering the singers, always underpinning and supporting them.

Overall it was a truly splendid Messiah that realized the intentions of the composer and it was a tremendous argument in favour of the use of small choral forces.

The use of the WurliTzer was so successful in its unfamiliar role, it would be a great pity if further use for it in this classical mode were not found for it.

R J Roberts

## WHAT IS A SENIOR CITIZEN?

A 'Senior Citizen', is one who was here before the Pill, before frozen foods, credit cards and ball-point pens. For us, 'Time-Sharing', meant togetherness, not computers, and a 'chip' meant a piece of wood. 'Hardware', meant hardware, and 'Software' was not even a word. Teenagers never wore slacks. We were before pantyhose, drip-dry clothes, dishwashers, clothes dryers and electric blankets. We got married first and then lived together, we thought cleavage was something butchers did. We were before Batman, disposable diapers, 'QE I', Jeeps, pizza, instant coffee and 'Kentucky Fried Chicken' wasn't even thought of. In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was for mowing, pot was something you cooked in, a 'gay' person was the life of the party, while 'Aids' meant beauty lotions or help for someone in trouble. We are today's Senior Citizens, a hardy bunch when you think of how the world has changed, and the adjustments we have had to make.

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## MORE MEMBER'S CLASSIFIEDS

### FOR SALE

#### BALDWIN CINEMA III Model 233

'Super Series' This organ is only 5 years old and the owner must reluctantly sell. It is in excellent condition and has two 61 note manuals and a full pedal board. This full console organ can be yours for only \$20,000 (ono). For further details contact Ron Brown on 632 4516

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### FOR URGENT SALE

**German Monkey Grinder Street Organ** - on cart (reproduction). Best offer over \$12,000.

also

**ANSAIR FLEXIBLE CLIPPER LUXURY CARAVAN BUS** - (ex Pioneer Tour Coach) Perkins 6354 Diesel. Full air brakes, mechanically very good. \$15,950 (ono)

Phone Peter Andersen (075) 346 592 or write to P O Box 487, Gosford, NSW, 2250 for further details.



## REVIEW - 17th NATIONAL CONVENTION - EASTER 1989 - PERTH

Well, the convention is over for another year. Over 200 theatre organ music lovers from all areas of Australia gathered in Perth for the Easter weekend. Below is a review prepared by Peter Bidence which will give you an idea of what you missed.

### Friday 24th March

It was perfect warm fine weather as conventioners arrived at the Western Australia College of Advanced Education in Claremont. T.O.S.A. (W.A.) Committee Members were lined up there to greet us as we alighted from our coaches and drinks were served on the lawn to quench any thirsts. Many were able to renew friendships with others from interstate divisions and much animated conversation was evident.

A delicious buffet smorgasbord was served in the college gymnasium and, following this, we strolled to the nearby John Leckie Music Centre across the park in Nedlands. Here the 3/10 Compton, originally used in the Plaza Cinema at Worthing U.K., is installed with the two chambers at the rear of the hall, whilst the console is raised on a small stage in the front left hand corner of the hall. When played by the ever popular and fun packed David Johnston the results were very gratifying and the organ performed well.

During the evening David was supplemented by entertainer Jimmy Gilbert who presented us with a couple of humorous skits.

Local organist John Pound shared the entertainment by playing a few items towards the end of the evening and demonstrated there is 'talent' over there in the Golden West.

### Saturday 25th March

After a 9.00am start from the hotel, our coaches took us initially to Kings Park for great views over the Swan River and of Perth City Centre. Then it was on again to nearby Winthrop Hall of the University of Western Australia to see and hear the McGilvray Organ built by J.W. Walker & Sons of U.K. in 1965. Organ builder John Larner described the instrument to us and

Andrew Partington played a short recital to demonstrate its tonal abilities and qualities including the horizontal trumpets. Re-boarding our coaches, following the brief visit to Winthrop Hall, we were driven along the northern bank of the Swan River via 'Millionaires Row' to see outside of some of the homes of well known local identities on our way to historic Freemantle (or Free-Oh! as the locals call it). Here we were shown some of the local landmarks as well as views from the hill out over the port area to Rottnest Island.

Our last stop prior to lunch was to visit the local St. Johns Church to hear Alex Bateman speak briefly about their Clifton organ as well as hear him play it. David Johnston was then inspired to try his hand at it also.

For the next hour or two we were on our own to arrange our lunches and explore the local sights on foot before the coaches called back to return us to the hotel.

### Late Afternoon Concert

Thanks to advance publicity, including an earlier afternoon broadcast on the local ABC radio station 6WF as well as a TV appearance on channel 10, there was a packed house and great anticipation at the John Leckie Music Centre to greet famous UK artist Douglas Reeve at the Compton. From the very beginning he left not the slightest doubt about his superb abilities and mastery of the Theatre Organ. He played in his usual English orchestral style with selections from well known light classics. It was the type of music so appreciated by those who remembered the organ when they were regularly and well played in the cinemas of yesteryear. Interspersed with these classical items, Douglas also played several items from more modern musicals.

Some of the classical items included: 'Radetzky March', Overture to 'Morning Noon & Night in Vienna', 'Meditation-from Thais', 'Hungarian Rhapsody', 'Spanish Eyes',

'Can Can' from Orpheus ion the Underworld, 'Le Reve Passe' (The Dream Passes) and many others.

Throughout the concert Douglas was highly selective with his choice of registrations - always highly appropriate and sympathetic to the piece being played. Not only were his registrations so well chosen and appropriate but they were also frequently changed to add further variety for the listener.

Douglas projects a warm and friendly personality to his audience and his keen sense of humour and dry wit appealed greatly. It was not long before he had established a great rapport and at times he encouraged the audience to join him by clapping or singing in the appropriate places.

Whilst Douglas exhibits his own distinct style, there were times, such as when he played 'I do like to be beside the Seaside' when he made the organ sound as though it was being played by Reginald Dixon himself.

During the second half, when Douglas was briefly describing his musical career since early childhood, he played some very short but remarkably realistic interpretations of the fairground barrel organ, reed organ, old time music box as well as drums and bagpipes.

Thanks to John Parker and others behind the scenes, the Compton sounded really great for the occasion and, as the saying goes, didn't miss a beat.

#### Birthday Celebrations

Following the concert, the majority of delegates participated in the birthday celebrations which were held back in the gymnasium of the college. There was a delicious and somewhat lengthy meal and dancing to the accompaniment of a band. Convention Committee Members also cut the 21st birthday Cake.

#### **Sunday 26th March**

A rather more leisurely start this morning after the previous late night. The coaches were back at 10.30 for one last trip to the John Leckie Music Centre.

The session "Organ Skills with the master" followed and began with two organists, Edith Dizon Fitzsimmons and Ruth Varney playing the Compton for short periods. Douglas then passed some of his personal views and comments regarding their playing as well as offering some general suggestions for anyone interested in playing the organ well. These included:

- \* Try wherever possible to play from memory, as it allows better scope for finding one's way around strange organs and better use of time for attention to registration.

- \* Try and develop better individual use of the swells, so gaining better control of the organ with its two (or more) chambers rather than playing it as a single chamber instrument with both pedals in unison.

- \* Try and become ambidextrous and become able to play melodies with both left and right hands.

- \* Remember to try for selective and individual use of the tremulants, because having all the trem on all the time does sound rather boring.

- \* Similarly, selective use of the percussion stops is usually much more effective from the audience's point of view.

- \* Avoid the use of full organ with glockenspiel and xylophone and more especially with octave couplers. One should avoid 'handfuls' of percussions, but rather use them as a delicate ornamentation as it were.

- \* When playing a song where you know the words, try and play the organ so it sounds like a voice and phrase the melody as if you were singing the words.

- \* Remember to pay attention to detail and well thought out registrations. Don't simply copy someone else's registrations because they happen to be on the pre-sets (pistons).

- \* Use good modulation and remember, some lovely quiet sounds will help you give a much more artistic performance.

- \* Remember there is nothing more irritating for some people than to hear the organ played too loudly.

\* When playing, try to keep the audience's attention by changing the mood of the music by changing the key, changing the rhythm, changing the registrations and remember to use care with percussions as they can be very assertive.

\* Remember, playing a pipe organ is different from playing an electronic organ as their respective layouts can be so very different.

\* Try to listen to individual ranks and build up one's own tone colours when working out one's own registrations. Don't try and put down a 'sweep of stops' but rather think of the organ as a fine box of paints with good colours. The player can, with correct use, make some beautifully artistic presentations by the correct mixing of the colours and everyone mixes them differently.

\* Don't always slavishly copy other. Try to develop an individual style.

\* When playing in public, try to begin playing as soon as possible. Don't spend long periods of time setting up the stops as it can be very boring for the audience. Remember, they are waiting to hear you play.

\* When confronted with a large organ with 3 or more manuals, don't be overwhelmed. Initially regard it simply as a two manual instrument and play it as such until you become more familiar with it. Then you can branch out into other areas as you feel confident.

\* When arranging a programme, remember audiences get bored with too much of the same. Try and play a varied programme with different rhythms, keys and registrations. They will assist in gaining audience attention.

Prior to lunch others tried their hand at the Compton during open console session including: Ray Clements, David Johnston, Elizabeth Edwards, Sean Dunwoody and Chris McPhee.

#### Inaugral Youth Concert at the Karrinyup Centre

Following a basket lunch, we were once again on the coaches and heading for the Karrinyup Centre to hear the 3/14 WurliT-

zer. Artists here were Ray Clements, David Johnston, Elizabeth Edwards, Sean Dunwoody and Chris McPhee with the grand finale by the much esteemed Douglas Reeve. He ended with the 'Maori Farewell', 'I'll see you again' (and I hope we will too!) then 'Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye'. There was great applause in appreciation of a very creditable afternoon from another fine organ.

John Pound was to have played at this concert, however he was unfortunately indisposed.

In the evening there was some relaxed informal revelry back at the hotel with most of the entertainment being provided by David Johnston assisted on occasions by Marie Kittson. David didn't forget his bagpipes either!

#### **Monday 27th March**

A complete change of scene to-day as we boarded two large launches for a cruise up the Swan River through some local winery areas to 'Mulberry Farm', a reception and entertaining centre in farm surroundings. Local wines were sampled during the cruise up the river and after arrival we enjoyed another excellent smorgasbord with a little more music to follow. Our pianists included David Johnston and Andrea Harrison with Ruth Varney playing the violin.

Douglas Reeve concluded the musical segment with more of his delightful playing - and it was noticed that even some staff stopped in their tracks or came out from behind the scenes to listen to his playing.

Ultimately it was time to reboard the launches for the cruise back down the river for Perth where many said their farewells.

#### **Tuesday 28th March**

For those able to stay a while longer in the west there was one more day for a little more sightseeing and yet another concert at the Karrinyup Centre with the artists being JoAnn Evans (from Seattle, USA), Ray Clements and John Fuhrman.

Well done T.O.S.A. (W.A.) it was a great convention!

Peter Bidencope

## ERIC SMITH

Last month, there appeared in these pages a brief message reporting the death of one of Sydneys' best known organists. Eric Smith was well known to nearly all organ lovers and the membership of TOSA was no exception.

Elsewhere in this issue is a letter received from a member which relates to Eric's younger days and his emerging love of the organ. Following is a tribute from Life Member, Frank Ellis who knew Eric well. Also, I have printed an anecdote which was told to me by TOSA member Heather Finch. Heather is presently the organist at St. Philips - Eastwood where Eric once was organist.

### ERIC SMITH - A TRIBUTE

It was reported in last month's TOSA News, that the well known and respected organist Eric Smith had passed away suddenly on 22nd March 1989. Eric was one of the early members of TOSA, having joined the Society about 2 or 3 years after its formation. A brilliant and meticulous musician and organist, he had played for TOSA members on many occasions and in many locations.

He appeared in a number of the Capitol Theatre Saturday morning concerts which took place at the early hour of 8.00am. He was one of the ten organists who took part in the final concert at the Capitol when TOSA bought that theatre's WurliTzer in February 1977. Eric also played a concert for us on the WurliTzer in the Chatswood Town Hall, before that instrument vanished from the organ scene.

He appeared on numerous occasions at our WurliTzer in the Marrickville Town Hall, and also arranged several concerts using the Lyceum Theatre's Christie organ, notably as part of one of our National Conventions. Eric was resident organist for many years in the Lyceum "Church in a Theatre" for the Methodist Church. He had also been organist in a number of other Sydney churches.

One of the memories I treasure of Eric's great talent took place in the Marrickville Town Hall in December 1980 when he accompanied the Touring Theatre Company

"Stars of Song" in an afternoon of musical comedy gems, as well as featuring some solo playing in his usual inimitable style. His fabulous accompaniment to a company of about 7 or 8 singers in a non-stop two-and-a-half hour performance is something I will long remember, and I'm very glad indeed to have a tape of that outstanding performance.

Sadly, on the 22nd March 1989, his career came to an end, and I join with TOSA members in mourning the passing of a fine organist, a loyal TOSA member, and a great friend. To his widow I extend my deepest sympathy.

Frank Ellis.

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Heather Finch told me by phone recently of a story she had had passed on to her regarding Eric's early days with the organ.

This story unfolded at St. Philips Church - Eastwood when a young man about 19 years of age came to the door of the Rectory and asked if he could see the organ.

The Rector's wife took this young man into the church to show him the organ and asked him if he would like to play the instrument. The young man sat down at the bench and 'magic came out of his fingers' as he played this organ. Not long after, he was appointed to the position of organist at St. Philips. Who was the young man? I'm sure that by now you must have all guessed. Eric Smith had that magic in his fingers until the end of his career.

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### YET ANOTHER THEATRE ORGANIST PASSES AWAY

This year has, so far, been one of the saddest for me personally. In the February issue of TOSA News I reported the death of my old friend Reubert Hayes, one of Australia's best known theatre organists, and an early TOSA Honorary member.

In the April TOSA News I reported the death of organist Joh Congert, another long time TOSA member, and, in the Stop Press of that same month's TOSA News, the sudden death of yet another early

TOSA member, organist Eric Smith, a tribute to whom appears elsewhere in this issue.

As I sat typing my tribute to Eric Smith, the phone rang to inform me of the, also sudden, death of my old friend Les Denley yet another of Sydney's theatre organists. I first became friends with Les in 1939, and this year marked the 50th year of our friendship. Alas, he passed away on Monday 10th April 1989.

When I first met Les, he was organist at the Regent Theatre Wentworthville, however World War 2 intervened to interrupt our friendship, and we both went into the Army. During the war, our paths crossed briefly on two occasions only. In the early days of our Army careers Les was stationed for a while near West Maitland, whilst I was nearby at Greta camp. One weekend, on leave, we journeyed to Newcastle and visited the Savoy Theatre, New Lambton, where Les introduced me to Wilbur Kentwell, then resident organist at the Savoy. Wilbur and Les had been at Parramatta High School together and from that meeting, my long friendship with Wilbur came into being.

A couple of years later, Les and I caught up with each other once again. This time in Townsville.

After the War, Les returned to the organ of the Regent Theatre, Wentworthville, and later appeared at the Strathfield Cinema, the Roxy Parramatta, The Victory Kogarah, plus some relief organist stints at the Astra Parramatta and the Burwood Palatial.

One of the most unassuming musicians I have ever known, he was a close and valued friend for fifty years. He was also a very loyal listener to the radio program I presented on 2CBA FM for just over three years, seldom missing one of them and quite frequently recording same. He frequently rang me to comment on the previous night's broadcast.

I will greatly miss his warm friendship, and I extend my sincere condolences to his wife Essie. Au revoir Les.

Frank Ellis

## TWO FREE CONCERTS

TOSA member Colin Adamson, who is the Deputy Director of Music at St. Johns Anglican Cathedral, Parramatta, is presenting two concerts in May.

The programmes will feature classical organ works by the like of Bach, light classics and opera selections, music from the movies and will also include music from the Broadway musicals. Also featured will be some contemporary music such as 'Memory' from "Cats". The concerts are designed to be informal yet very enjoyable.

On Saturday night 13th May at 7pm at the St. Johns Cathedral, Parramatta the first concert will be held. Ample parking is available in the cathedral grounds.

The final concert is on Saturday night May 20th at 6.30pm. This concert is being held at St. Andrews Anglican Church in Strathfield. The church is directly opposite the end of the F4 freeway at Strathfield and is on the corner of Swan Avenue (formerly Concord Road) and Parramatta Road.

Both concerts are free and you can be assured of an enjoyable evening's entertainment.

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## PRACTICE TIMES AVAILABLE

A reminder that members can book practice sessions on the Marrickville Town Hall WurliTzer. Some vacancies exist on the roster so please contact our practice convenor Bob Staunton.

You will find the phone number for Bob in the front of TOSA NEWS on the Directory Page.

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## STREET AND DANCE ORGANS

by Colin Tringham.

In November last year, a group of T.O.S.A. members visited the workshop of Craig Robson at Motor City, Alexandria to see his collection of Organs and other musical instruments. There is no doubt that all found it an interesting experience. When the various Organs were played, many members could not resist having a dance around the floor and everywhere there were happy, smiling faces, and why not indeed. If the Music of these organs had to be summed up in one word, then that word might easily be "Jolly".

I decided to do some research on these Organs for my own amusement, and then thought that perhaps you would be interested in learning a little more about these units. But this is a Theatre Organ Society, and what have these units to do with us, you may say (although I hope you don't). For the disbelievers there is a GREAT DEAL in common with the Theatre Organs we all know and love.

In the first place, don't forget that WurliTzer were selling the American equivalent of these Organs long before they sold their first WurliTzer Theatre Organ. Perhaps it was the expertise they gained from their Band Organs which allowed them to move swiftly into the Pipe Organ scene when that market opened.

The Europeans concentrated on the larger fairground Organs, whilst the Americans generally favoured the loudly voiced Band Organs to provide music for fairs and amusements. What is the difference? Band Organs nearly always had a set of brass trumpets, voiced very loudly, plus some piercing piccolo pipes to make the greatest amount of noise possible. As these Organs had to be very portable - they were always moving around the country with the fair - they had to eliminate anything which was unnecessary. The largest item in the Organ was of course the bass pipes. The smaller Band Organs made do with only THREE stopped pipes - normally C, G and F, which made the music somewhat restricted. These pipes were also heavily mitred and were usually incorporated in the base of the instrument. Sometimes the pipes had common walls to save weight and space. In addition the number of keys was also very

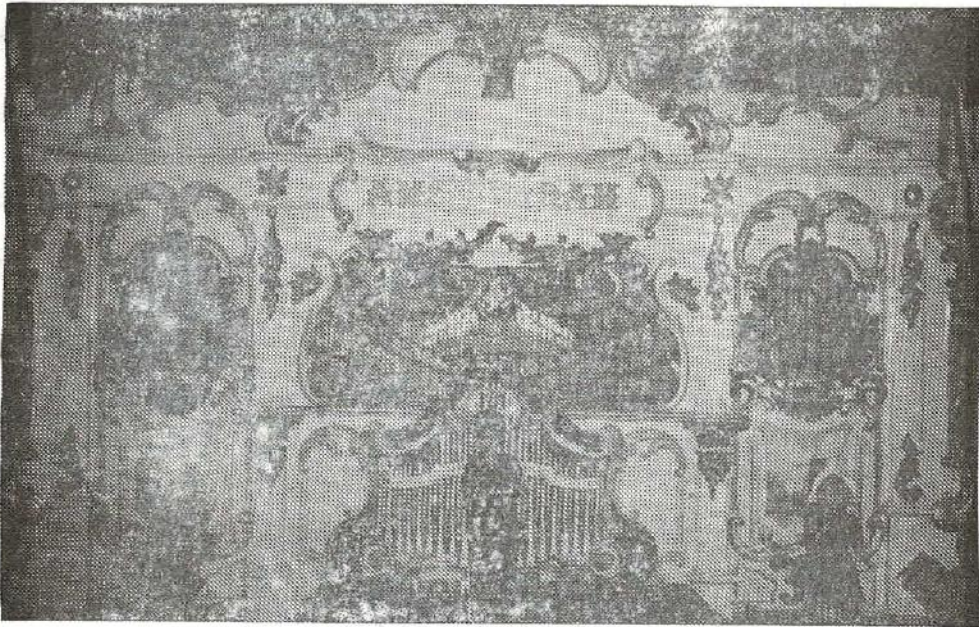
limited. In the case of the small WurliTzer 125 Band Organ there were only 28 keys - or slots in the music. One would be used to operate the trumpet stop or register, three were used for the bass notes, whilst the rest were divided up between the accompaniment and the melody line. By splitting the roll up in this way, the most efficient use was made of the pipes in the Organ. The Europeans did the same, but usually with many more keys which were divided up between the Bass, the Accompaniment, the Counter-melody and the Melody. This gave the maximum versatility in sound.

Also eliminated were the regulators which are normally used in Pipe Organs to allow different sets of pipes to be operated from different wind pressures. This caused a great deal of problems with the string (violin and gamba) pipes as the wind pressure was usually too high for these to be stable. Overblowing changes the harmonics. The Europeans solved this problem with a 'Frein Harmonique' or harmonic brake which was a piece of metal shaped to fit the pipe mouth and which could be adjusted to eliminate the problem.

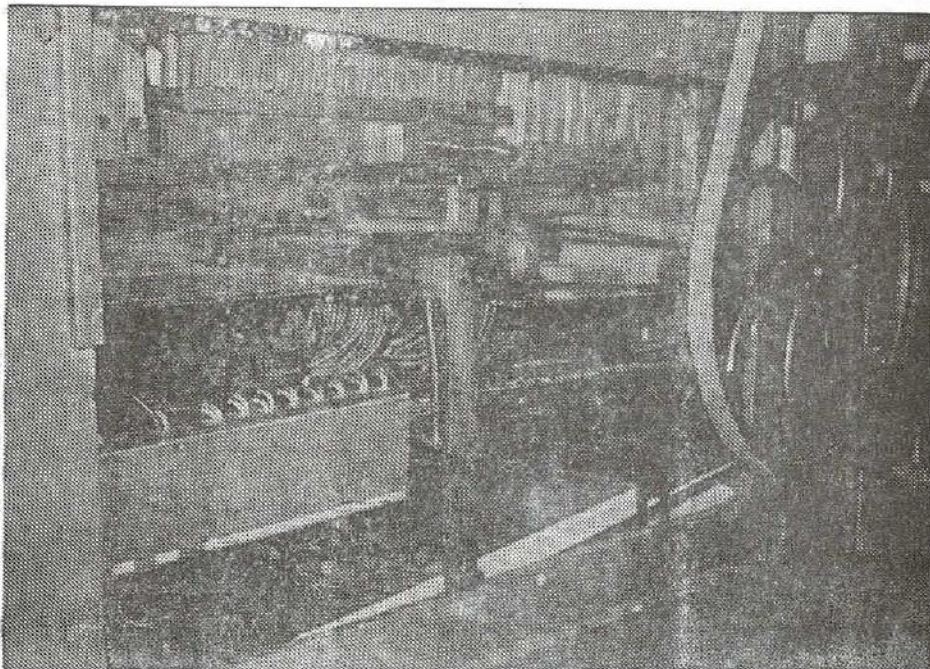
Let us look at the Organs which are pictured on the following pages. The smallest, and the one which we often see around the streets of Sydney, is the Dutch Street Organ, the Amsterdam. This is a 72 key Organ, made by Dewyng, who was a foreman of Mortier. This Gentleman made three such Organs before re-joining the Mortier Company. The Organ has more Bass notes than the example mentioned above, but is far from Chromatic. Basses, D Sharp, G Sharp, A and B are missing completely, and keys D Sharp and G Sharp are missing throughout the keyboard. The notes in the roll are split in the following manner - Bass, 8 notes; Accompaniment, 10 notes; Melody, 18 notes; and Counter Melody 14 Notes. The remaining holes in the roll are used for percussion effect - drums, cymbals etc and the bells held by the Dutch Girls on the front of the Organ. The different sets of pipes are brought into operation by a system which is commonly used on the Continent. A single hole in the roll is used to cancel all operable pipe ranks (some pipes are always connected), and a separate hole is used for each rank of pipes to be brought into operation. If a register hole - say for the violin pipes - is punched at the same

time as the Cancel (called Declanche), all registers will be cancelled EXCEPT the violin pipes. The hole of the required register is usually made longer to ensure that it is locked in place after the Cancel perforation has passed.

The ranks of pipes used in the Amsterdam are: Bourdons (2 ranks), Piccolos, Violins (2 ranks) and Cellos (Bass Violins) plus two loud reeds, the Trombone and Bariton ranks. Note that in this, as in many other Street Organs, by switching in say Cellos for the counter melody and Violins for the melody, the range of notes which can be played in one run can be made longer.

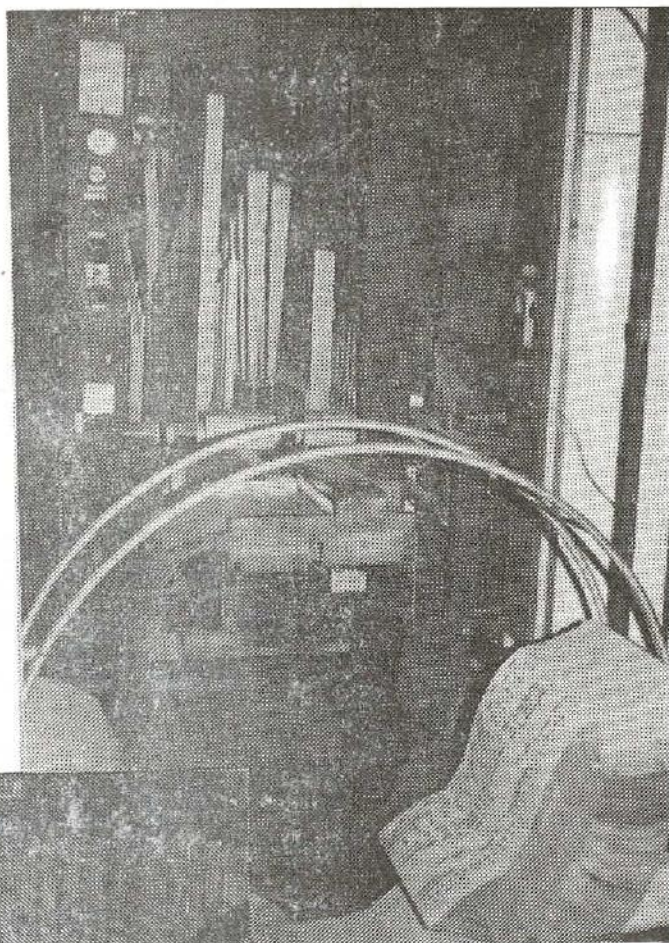


THE 'AMSTERDAM ORGAN'

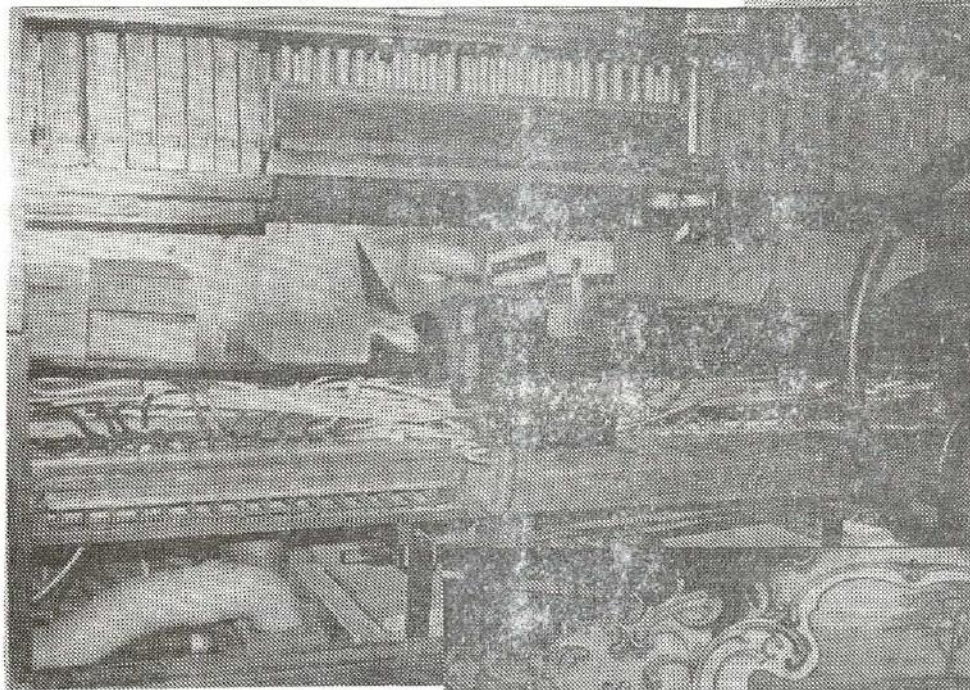


The Golden Lion is a larger Mortier Organ. It is an 82 key Organ, fully Chromatic with the following sectionalisation of the pipe ranks. Bass 12 notes, Accompaniment 12 notes, Melody 18 notes, Counter Melody 15 notes. The ranks of pipes consist of :- Bourdons, Vibraton, Trombone, Bariton, Flute 8, Vox Celeste, Cello, Violins (2 ranks), Onda Maris plus a Xylophone. The Vibraton is a special pipe rank designed for fairground Organs, it has a hole in the pipe - about half way down - with a piece of perforated foil held in place to give the pipe a 'tizzy' sound. These pipes can be seen at the bottom of the photograph.

The Bariton is also a special pipe rank, a large reed with a square, pyramid shaped top to give good strong harmonics without going out of tune. The Golden Lion was auctioned by Sotheby's in early March, reaching a figure of around \$150,000.

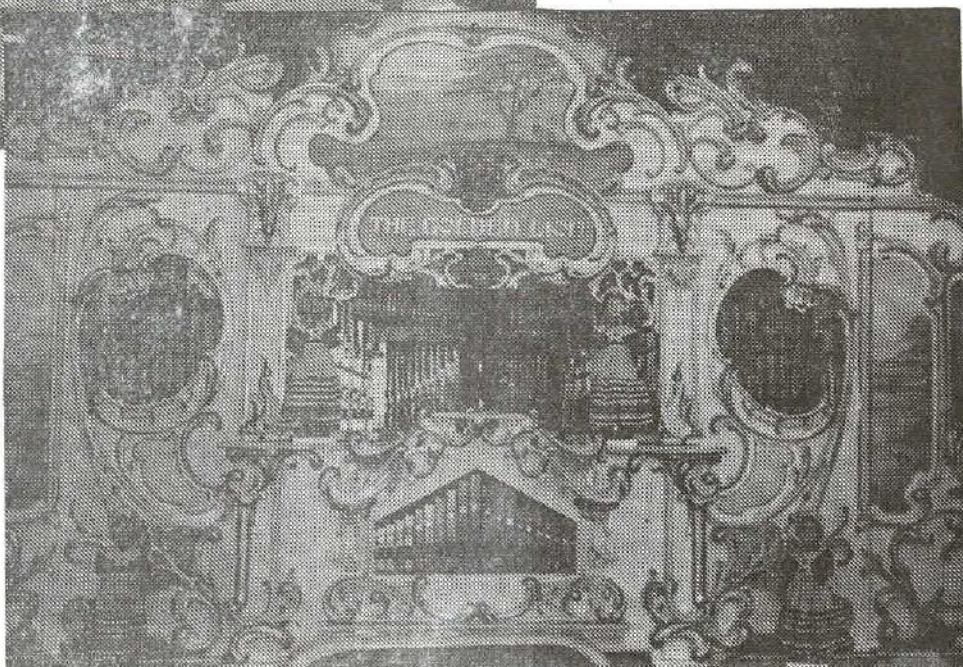


Side view



Rear view

THE 'GOLDEN LION'







**The DeCap Robot Orchestra**

Although not shown in the photographs, there was also a WurliTzer style A automatic harp on display, unfortunately not working. These were actually made by J.H. Whitlock and Company of Rising Sun, Indiana. The WurliTzer company operated large numbers of these machines in cafes and bars, and their Cincinatti branch had so many instruments in use that one man was employed full time to change the rolls and empty the money boxes. The Harp was inclined to go out of tune much more often than a Piano, but, having only one string to a note, was more easily tuned. Many other coin operated machines were sold or leased by WurliTzer to 'Route Operators' who would install these roll playing machines in as many locations as possible. A very similar set-up is used today for cigarette machines and other coin-vending units still sold by the (modern) WurliTzer company!

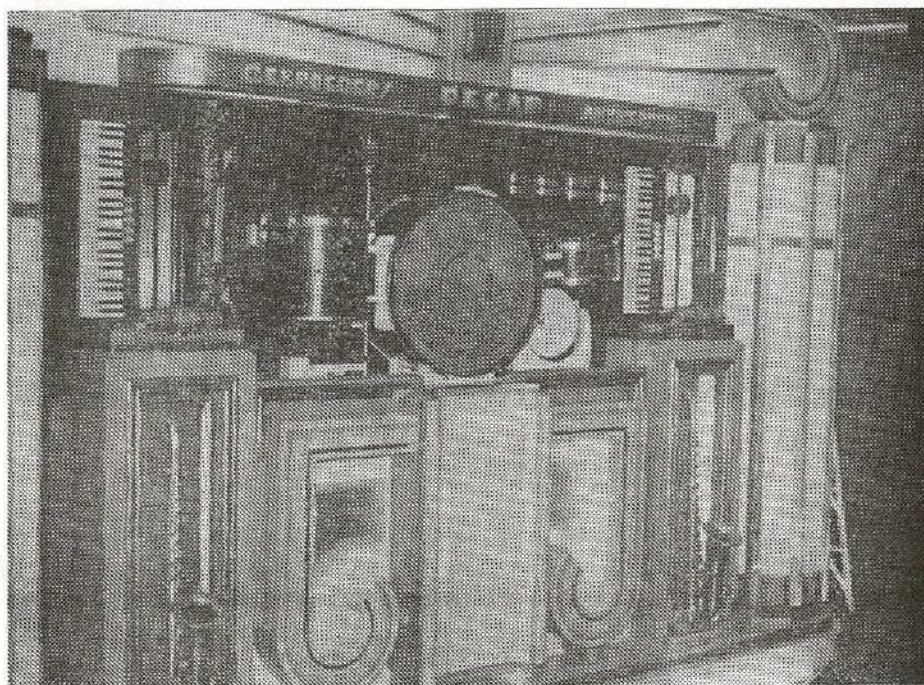
Since writing the above, my Father, who is 87, came up with an interesting snippet to indicate that Organs were not universally popular. Apparently a law was passed in England, that fairground Organs could only play works of a religious nature before midday on Sundays. Unfortunately there were very few such rolls made. My Father recounts that the local fairground played two rolls over and over again on Sunday mornings - 'Oro Pro Nobis' and 'Ave Maria'. It must have been a great relief for everyone when the afternoon came and the range of music could be widened!

Footnote. This article was written to appear also in the newsletter of the Mechanical Musical Instruments Collectors Society in which Colin takes an active part. Colin also supplied the screened bromides which we have used in this article.

#### **ALL MEMBERS - IMPORTANT**

Before you destroy your TOSA NEWS envelope, please check and make sure that we have your name and address correct. With the change of Secretaries a new computer system is being used and we need to make sure everything is correct. If there are any errors please phone the Secretary. Many thanks.

The next Organ, in a completely different vein, was the elaborately lit Belgian DeCap Dance Organ. This uses a 92 hole (key) roll and features two accordians - which actually move - and whose keys are operated pneumatically from the roll. The Saxophone in the centre of the instrument does not actually play, but there is a set of Saxophone pipes mounted just behind the instrument. Note that, although this whole Organ appears to date from the 1930's, the main works could easily be older as many of the larger early Gavioli Organs were often broken up and the parts used for later smaller Organs. The very high quality of the older Organs made them a popular source for parts! This unit is completely chromatic.



**The DeCap Dance Organ**

The Organ which aroused almost as much interest as the others combined was the visually interesting De-Cap Robot Organ. This was built in 1948 when such Organs briefly experienced a burst of renewed interest. This Organ is completely Chromatic, and was built around a small Hammond Organ which was operated pneumatically from a 98 key paper roll. In the instrument seen, the Hammond Organ had been replaced with a purely electronic instrument. The movement of the robots was especially well done. The drummer has two distinct positions. In one he can play the tap Cymbal and side drum whilst his feet play the bass drum and cymbals.

In the other position he can play a wood block and side drum. The Saxophone player in centre stage stands up in a most realistic manner to play his instrument and his cheeks bulge and his shoulders heave as he sounds his notes. The Accordion player at the right moves his instrument (which is played pneumatically) and turns his head from side to side. In addition, there are three sets of lights in the 'eyes' of each robot which give it the impression of looking around while playing. The whole effect is quite stunning.