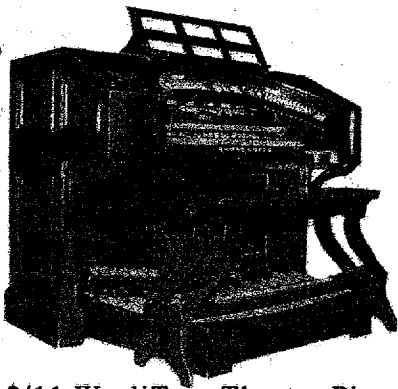
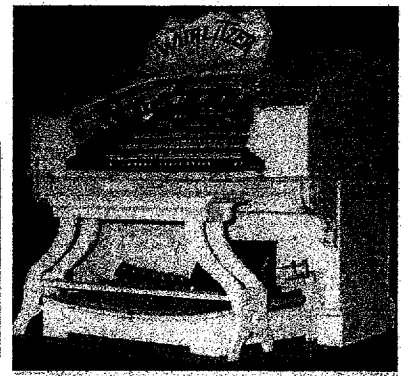


JANUARY / FEBRUARY,
2004



2/11 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

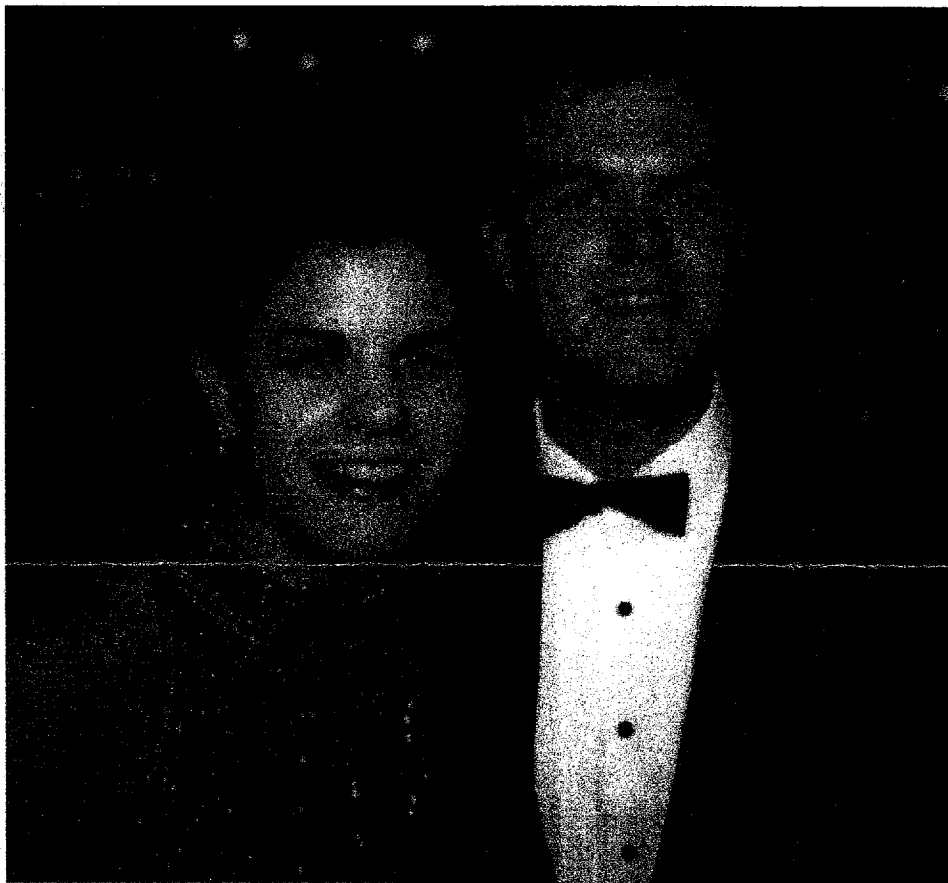
TOSA



3/17 WurliTzer Theatre Pipe Organ
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Ryan Heggie and Michelle Nicolle



Orion Centre Campsie

Sunday 15th February 2004 at 2pm

Volume 43

Issue 1

PRINTED BY TOSA

The Official Publication of Theatre Organ Society of Australia (NSW Division) Inc.

P.O. Box 6170, South Penrith DC, NSW, 2750

Print Post Approved PP255003/01823

Price

\$2.00

TOSA NEWS

JANUARY / FEBRUARY, 2004

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

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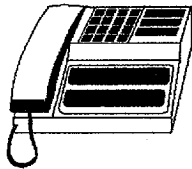
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TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - EDITOR

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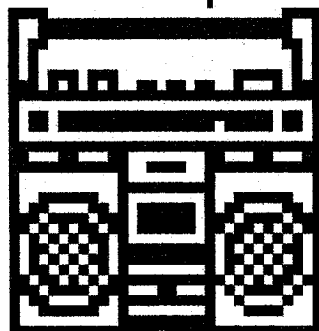
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<http://www.tosa.net.au>



COMING EVENTS

JANUARY, 2004!

Happy New Year !!!!

Monday 5 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Thursday 8 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Afternoon
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm

NO Marrickville Players' Evening in January

FEBRUARY

Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

NO Orion Players' Afternoon in February

Sunday 15 at 2.00pm Michelle Nicolle and
Ryan Heggie Concert
Orion Centre Campsie

NO Marrickville Players' Evening in February

MARCH

Monday 1 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Thursday 11 at 1.30pm Members' Playing Afternoon
Orion Centre Campsie
Phone 9716 0151 to confirm

Sunday 21 at 2.00pm Jelani Eddington Concert
Marrickville Town Hall

Thursday 25 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Evening
Marrickville Town Hall
Phone 9798 6742 to confirm

REMEMBER TO TUNE IN TO 2NBC-FM 90.1
EVERY MONDAY AT 7.30 pm
For TOSA's "Sweet and Lovely"
Presented by Chris Styles

2MBS-FM102.5 on Tuesday 10th February at 12.30pm
For "Theatre Pipe Organ - Seriously"
AND on Saturday 7th February at 6.00pm
For "Colours of the King",
Both presented by Andrew Grahame

From The President

Hello again !

Our Annual General Meeting was held last November and we were grateful that so many took the trouble to come and give their support to TOSA. "Woodstock" is a very pleasant place and so was the atmosphere of the meeting.

Please look for my report to the AGM elsewhere in this edition of *TOSA News* (page 5) - it says all I could want to put into print at this moment. You will also find our Secretary's Report.

Also in this edition you will find a list of the new concert ticket prices - a small and very reasonable increase. Also, we have increased full membership fees from \$28 to \$30, and the Concession price moves from \$17 to \$20. If only the prices of bus and train tickets were as reasonable!!

Would those who join in the Members' Playing Afternoons and Evenings please check the "Coming Events" column on page 2, as there have been some changes.

I'm looking forward to the Orion concert on 15th February. Michelle Nicolle and Ryan Heggie are an attractive and entertaining young couple. I saw them in concert at the Adelaide TOSA Festival last year, and can assure you they are not to be missed!

See you there !

For now - Walter Pearce



Editorial

Happy New Year to all TOSA News readers - may 2004 be full of Health and Happiness for you and yours.

Let's hope too that our Society will prosper in 2004, especially through great attendances at our fabulous concerts, every one of which will present artists of the highest calibre and have maximum entertainment value.

A big welcome and thank you to a new reviewer, Doug Grant., who has made an excellent first contribution with his report on TOSA's 2003 Special Christmas Concert with John Atwell (pages 11 and 12).

Many thanks to the other

contributors to this issue - John Andrews, Debra and Richard Marschall, Andrew Grahame, Walter Pearce, Allan Brooker, and Barry Tooker. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

Best Wishes for 2004,
Colin Groves

Welcome To New Members

TOSA (NSW) is pleased to welcome a number of new members to our 'ranks' and to wish them a long and happy stay within our Society :

Gloria Paulsen - Kogarah
Sonia Moar - Beverley Park
Donald Moar - Beverley Park
Gloria Ferry - Kingsgrove
Mervyn Nolan - Punchbowl
Michael Mortimer - Epping
Edward Summerbell - Paddington
Donald Withers - Hornsby Heights
Patience Whiteford - Campsie
Pat Brook - Roseville
Lorrie Snowdon - Macquarie Fields

Concert Ticket Prices

As of February 2004 the following TOSA concert ticket prices will apply. There has been no increase over the past four years, and the prices are still very reasonable:

	Australian Artists	Overseas Artists
Non-members	\$22	\$25
Non-member Pension	\$20	\$22
TOSA Members	\$18	\$18
Students 15 - 21yrs	\$10	\$10
Child under 15 yrs with an adult	FREE	

To contact the *Promotions Team* with your ideas and support :

Tom Barber - 9629 3105 barber@idx.com.au

OR John Batts - 9389 8659 js_batts@hotmail.com

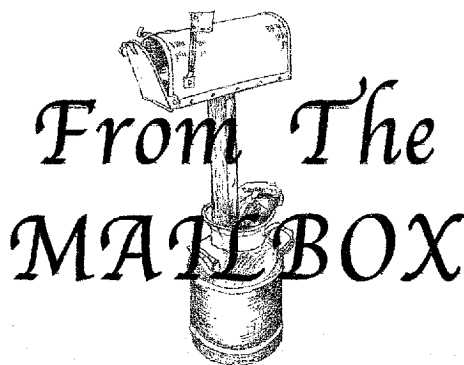
Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

The deadline for each edition of *TOSA News* is the 12th of the preceding month

Members' Playing Sessions

The Members' Playing Afternoon at the Orion on 13th November was the last at Campsie for the year. Players were Jack Rose, Bruce Bisby, Frank Lewis, Walter Pearce, Tom Barber, John Batts, Ron Ivin, and Wendy Hambly. Listening were Betty Rose, John Atkins, Jenny Pearce, Edna Hambly, Colin Groves, and Paul Luci. A good time was had by all.

The last Members' Evening for 2003 at Marrickville was held on 27th November, and an even better time was had by all. The evening included the usual visit from Santa, and a top class Christmas supper. We listened to the same players (except for Ron Ivin), and the listeners, sometimes even clapping along, were Betty Rose, Edna Hambly and Jenny Pearce.



Radio Programmes

From Andrew Grahame :

"Colours of the King" on 2MBS-FM 105.2 will be moving to a new time-slot as of January 2004. The Programming Committee review everything every six months, and at the last review it was decided to put "Colours" back by an hour to 6 pm, though still on the second Saturday of each month.

**Saturday February 7th
2004, 6pm:**

The Gabler organ at Weingarten Abbey (completed 1750) :
Pachelbel - *Praeludium in D minor* -

(organist - Piet Kee)

Krebs - *Chorale Prelude "Ach Herr mit Armer Sünder"* (Gerhard Gnann)

JS Bach - *Fugue in F minor BWV 534* (PK)

Krebs - *Tocatta and Fugue in A minor* (GG)

Krebs - *Chorale Prelude "Allein Gott in her Hoh' sei Ehr"* (GG)

JM Bach - *In Dulci Jubilo* (PK)

Lebeque - *Les Cloches* (PK)

Krebs - *Prelude and Fugue in C major* (GG)

"The Theatre Pipe Organ - *Seriously*" (FM-105.2) has been approved until June 2004 (2nd Tuesday):

**Tuesday, January 13th at
12.30pm:**

Von Suppé - *Light Cavalry Overture* (Russell Holmes at the Wynton House 3/18 Wurlitzer)

V. Herbert - *Fleurette* (Lyn Larsen at the Sanfilippo residence 5/80 Wurlitzer)

Chovaux - *March in A* (Simon Wright at the 4/20 Wurlitzer in the Paramount, Manchester)

C. Dawes - *Melody in A* (Carlo Curley at the 5/80 Sanfilippo Wurlitzer)

Poulenc - *Presto in B Flat* (Barry Baker at the 4/36 Ronald Wehmeir residence Wurlitzer)

Puccini - "*Nessun Dorma*" from "*Turandot*" (Walt Strony at the 5/80 Sanfilippo residence Wurlitzer)

**Tuesday, February 10th at
12.30pm:**

Duncan - *March* from "*A Little Suite*" (Joseph Seal at the 3/12 Wurlitzer in the Regal, Kingston-upon-Thames)

Mozart - *Ronda Alla Turca* (Tony Fenelon at the 2/10 Wurlitzer in Pulteney Grammar School, Adelaide)

Mendelssohn - *Scherzo* from "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*" (William Davies at the 4/14 Wurlitzer in the Granada, Tooting)

Chopin - *Waltz in A flat* and Von Paradis - *Sicilienne* (Gerald Shaw at the 5/17 Compton in the Odeon, Leicester Square)

Léhar - Selection from "*The Merry Widow*" (Al Bollington at the Compton in the Odeon, Tottenham Court Road)

Sullivan - Selection from "*The Gondoliers*" (Joseph Seal at the 3/12 Wurlitzer in the Regal, Kingston-upon-Thames)

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2003 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION INC.)

Secretary's Report

Good afternoon, members. Thank you for supporting TOSA by coming along to the Annual General Meeting.

In 2003 we saw Bill Schumacher's retirement as Secretary. We wish him well in his new home in Terranora, NSW, and hope he will visit us for concerts when he can. He'll be a tough act to follow.

Of the many items of business Committee conducts in its monthly meetings, there is nearly always discussion of how to increase membership, as well as the continuing saga of "bums on seats". As you will be aware, in the not so distant future, TOSA will require an influx of younger members, not only to learn instrument maintenance and to help with concert staging, but also to gain an appreciation of organ as a viable musical instrument. To this end, TOSA ideally needs a club house where its instruments could be installed, hold concerts or workshops, and have daily access for playing or repair. Such a venue would likely attract new members and perhaps sponsorship. However, since the cost of acquiring our own place is prohibitive in the current market, we'll just have to bide our time, or hope for a benefactor.

As far as bums on seats goes, I'm pleased to report that we've got a fantastic line up of artists for 2004. We've achieved a good mix of well-known Australian and overseas artists, as well as some fresh Australian talent. Committee tries very hard to please members of long standing while introducing Theatre Organ to those who may be unfamiliar with its pleasures. Even if the artist may be unfamiliar to you, please remember that even the well-known artists had to begin somewhere. So, I ask for your continued support by attending every concert you can. You can even bring a friend who's never attended a TOSA concert for free! Concerts are always filled with lots musical fun and fellowship.

I would like to thank the many wonderful and dedicated people who work to promote TOSA and help out at

the concerts and events. As the "newbie" Secretary, I am not yet familiar with all your names to give formal recognition, but please accept my thanks for your tireless efforts on behalf of TOSA.

The holiday season is fast approaching. Please be safe and well during the silly season ... and mark your calendar for the February concert at the Orion!

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Marschall

President's Report

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen of TOSA. Welcome to this Annual General Meeting in these beautiful surroundings at Woodstock. Your Committee has been holding its monthly meetings here in a small upstairs room for some months now.

ARTISTS:

As usual we've had excellent concerts this year, including organists of renown together with supporting acts of quality. In February Bill Schumacher started the year with "friends" Wendy Hambly, David Smith, piano virtuoso Paul Young, and singer Jan Pringle. Then followed Russell Holmes, Warren Lubich, Margaret Hall in concert with Owen Watkins and Tamara Rozek, then Cliff Bingham playing solo and accompanying Paul Maybury. August brought us David Wickerham, then followed Neil Jensen, and Tony Fenelon. Now we are looking forward to John Atwell in December. That's a heap of entertainment! 2004 is looking just as good.

THANK YOU:

In 2003 TOSA (NSW) lost some long-time workers.

Cliff Bingham has not been able to get to Committee Meetings for several months due to a change in his work schedule, and he has therefore had to pull off the Committee. On your behalf I thank him for many years of support and work for TOSA, and express the hope that there will still be ways he can help.

Bill Schumacher, our longtime Secretary, Artist Liaison Officer and

Sound Recordist, has recently moved out of town and I have already, in *TOSA News*, expressed our gratitude for the unstinting work he did. We are glad to have discovered a very capable replacement Secretary in the person of Debra Marschall, and a new audio man in Dax Liniere.

We have now lost Peter Harding who passed away a week ago. Peter, one of "Nature's Gentlemen", joined TOSA in 1984. He has served faithfully on Committee, has been our Signwriter, and was given charge of Concert Ushering. He also helped with the Tea and Coffee at concerts, and anything else he saw that needed doing he quietly did. Not the least of his abilities was to encourage people - and this he frequently did for me as I took on being President. We are grateful for what he has done, and will remember him fondly as an example to follow. We sent Peter's wife Kath, flowers and a message from all of us at TOSA. We offer her our sincere condolences.

Hearing of Peter's death, we immediately offered Kath help with the Concert Ticket bookings and door sales. But being the trooper that she is, she said it would be complicated to hand the job over at short notice and that she would continue in her role. Thank you, Kath.

I won't name the many other helpers right now, although it would be easy to spend a long time doing so. Thank you everyone who has done his or her bit, even our Treasurer who has such trouble with me.

Perhaps I should give notice here that I plan 2004 to be my last term as President - so you might like to start looking for a replacement. I thank members for their support - especially the Committee.

RADIO PROGRAM:

Last year we reported that we were hoping to get a program on 2NBC-FM 90.1 (Sydney). I can now tell you that we have succeeded. Chris Styles can be heard every Monday evening at 7.30pm with a program of Theatre Organ music. Thank you, Chris. 2NBC have waved some of their rules to make it easy for us to broadcast, and have now decided, of their own accord,

to phone us every two weeks during their breakfast session so we can be interviewed about TOSA activities and coming concerts.

In *TOSA News* each month you will also find the times that Andrew Grahame presents the program "Theatre Pipe Organ - Seriously" on 2MBS-FM 102.5. We hope that one day 2MBS will soften enough to allow full-blooded Theatre Organ sounds and repertoire to be heard on its wavelength.

EXPENSES:

Last year I reported that we had a meeting between Canterbury Council representatives and Joe Zouki, the Orion leaseholder, and TOSA. We asked, among other things, that our Campsie concert rental be halved. Well, we are glad to be able to report that Council now directly subsidises us for up to five concerts per year by an amount that goes somewhere near 50% of our rental. This still leaves a bill much higher than at Marrickville - which is a measure of how exorbitant it has been - but it certainly helps.

If only our other expenses could be halved!

In order to manage TOSA responsibly your Committee has made some decisions about the future, and you will find that Concert Ticket prices and Membership fees will be adjusted shortly. We are also contemplating several levels of concert prices - one for Australian artists, one for expensive overseas artists, and another for some really impressive multi-artist productions. We are also concerned about the cost of insurance and have contemplated some changes there. I will leave our Treasurer, Geoff, to talk more about such things.

GETTING MORE PEOPLE INTO TOSA:

As suggested last AGM, a TOSA Promotions Team has been formed and ways of increasing Concert attendance have been considered. Your help is needed, and they will be appealing to you today. The future of TOSA depends on such things.

But remember that the most productive way of getting new members is, as always, the result of members giving friends and rels a personal invitation to concerts.

You may be interested to know that at this time last year we had a

membership of 488 and now the figure is 472. While this is still a healthy enough figure, it is clear we need to increase rather than decrease. This year, about 10 members died, and 40 or so others did not renew for a variety of reasons. On the other hand we gained over 35 new members, some of whom were younger people.

MARRICKVILLE & CAMPSIE ACCESS:

As often reported, we are still having trouble accessing Marrickville Town Hall and the Orion. We have only been able to have four Members' Playing Evenings at Marrickville this year - and that includes one, hopefully, next Thursday. We had five Players' Afternoons at the Orion.

But these figures hide the worrying problems of getting Concert rehearsal and tuning times, and opportunities to service the instruments. For example, with some difficulty, we were allocated a few hours access to the Orion this morning from 8am. We couldn't find out what time we would have to leave, and we expected to have to work silently downstairs. However, we managed three or four productive hours.

By the way, we have now been told that the Orion has white-ants! The floors in the kitchen and in the stage area will have to be pulled up and treated and we will have to check our organ chambers for any sign of termites! We will also have to remove some very large pipes that have been stored unused and inaccessible under the floor.

But as they say, "When the going gets tough ...".

Meanwhile, repeating last year's report, "we still have two magnificent instruments, and lots of good entertainment to come".

On behalf of your Committee, and Jenny and myself, I wish you a joyful Christmas and a healthy and musical 2004

Walter Pearce
President

Promotions Committee Report

Against the backdrop of falling membership and decreased attendance at concerts, the Promotions Committee of TOSA (NSW) was formed as a proactive subcommittee during the past year in order to examine ways of counteracting that disappointing trend. Its powers are generally limited to

reporting to the senior TOSA Committee, principally through the Minutes of every meeting, and making suggestions - otherwise its status may be described (albeit metaphorically) as being something between a think-tank and lightning-rod detector.

Initially membership was by appointment. That group early on decided upon its officers and wrote job descriptions. Since inception, the Promotions Committee has regrettably accepted the resignations of Tamara Rozek and Mervyn Holland, and has welcomed Debra Marschall to its ranks. Currently the Committee consists of: Tom Barber and John Batts (co-chairs), Jenny Pearce (minute secretary), Peter Held, and Ron Mosman. It has yet to reach what may be described as an optimal size of about ten members and still lacks a Treasurer.

The Promotions Committee has been meeting monthly since its inaugural session last January. This Committee has actively sought input from Society members and has spent most of its time discussing potential initiatives and prioritising possible lines of action. Suggestions may be made to the Committee formally or informally, in writing (letters, faxes, or email) or by word of mouth (at concerts or over the telephone). We will consider short-term or long-term proposals and especially welcome volunteers.

Thus far, the Promotions Committee can only report on two initiatives which have been implemented, though others are under active consideration. In the two, both of which may be considered long-term and likely to raise the profile of TOSA in the community, we have been supported by the senior committee in (i) presenting to Marrickville Library a copy of the theatre organ CD - yes: it's Australian! And (ii) writing to 280 piano-teachers in Sydney, outlining the presence of TOSA and offering tickets for a "first-time" theatre-organ concert experience for the instructor and piano student(s). Both should enhance the public awareness of TOSA in the wider community and hint at its "pro bono" commitment.

A start has been made; we acknowledge that there is a long road ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
John S. Batts & Tom Barber
(co-chairs)

The Future of the Organ will also be TOSA's Future

Some thoughts by Richard and Debra Marschall

During the course of developing and testing Marschall Acoustics Instruments' Digital Audio Workstation and Pipe Organ Emulators, we spoke with many organists and conducted written correspondence with many more worldwide. Most were full-time professional musicians, but nearly all the rest could be classified as "serious amateurs". Their musical interests were predominately classical (Baroque, in particular), although jazz and pop were often popular as well. "Traditional" theatre organ (as in tunes from 1920 to maybe 1940) represented a distinct minority interest with classical aficionados out-numbering theatre organ fans by at least 20 to 1.

Regardless of the main style of their organ interests, all organists expressed concern about the decline of popularity of the instrument and the lack of uptake by the younger generations. Upon closer examination, it is not only this relatively sudden decline of organ's popularity that is most puzzling, but why was it so popular during a certain period of recent history?

It is easy enough to understand why the theatre organ was so intensely popular during the 1920s and 1930s. The preceding period of the early 1900s saw the introduction of giant town hall and concert hall organs for public entertainment. Most of the population then attended worship services and thus were also familiar with the pipe organ in that setting, along with the familiarization with at least a segment of serious organ literature. Finally, it was an age of tremendous technical and economic progress with "organ-like" instruments such as the *Cahill Telharmonium* (the predecessor to tone-wheel *Hammond* organs) being introduced at the turn of the century.

By the time the Robert Hope-Jones "unit orchestras" (the theatre pipe organ as we know it today) appeared, the public was accustomed to organ for mass entertainment. There was an ample supply of trained organists and the atmospheric theatres of the era provided outstanding venues.

In the mid-1930s, the *Hammond* electro-mechanical tone-wheel organs appeared and were immediately popular despite their retail price being approximately three times that of a good

automobile. Even though there was a worldwide economic depression at the time, *Hammond* sold over 5000 organs in its first three years. Both George Gershwin and Henry Ford bought them, as did a host of radio stations.

There is no question that Laurens Hammond was an engineering and marketing genius. With an earned degree in mechanical engineering, he was a prolific inventor and fluent in at least three languages. Ironically, his musical training was limited, so he relied instead on his company's assistant treasurer for musical quality issues. His company manufactured a diverse range of electro-mechanical and electronic organs for over 50 years. Some models were incredibly popular. Almost all of the electronic organ manufacturers who followed imitated (sometimes shamelessly) the stylistic and control features of *Hammond* organs. To this day, one wonders if nearly the entire market of these other organ manufacturers didn't "ride on the coat-tails" of Laurens Hammond's most excellent marketing.

Many people who spent their formative years in the 1930s would come to like theatre organ for nostalgic reasons. Some would have been customers of purveyors of home "electronic theatre organs", particularly during the 1960s and 1970s when their disposable, discretionary incomes were high. As a consequence of this, performing artists contracted by the organ manufacturers played tunes that appealed to this demographic. This tended to turn off anybody in the younger generations who may have ventured into the gathering. As Bill Irwin pointed out in the March 1985 issue of *Contemporary Keyboard*, "It becomes a vicious circle." He also noted, "Most or all of the organ manufacturers have done away with their staff of performing artists, a highly coveted position that many aspiring organists had set their sites on ... Many company artists of the past have gone into retail selling to stay with the organ, and some have left the business completely." Bill Irwin concludes with "why isn't there a greater demand to have these one-person orchestras performing in clubs, lounges, restaurants, and so on? I suspect that image has a lot to do with it."

So, these factors certainly explain a demographic peak for some musical styles. They are without doubt barriers to TOSA membership and concert attendance by younger generations. But, is the situation as hopeless as some seem to make it? We think not.

During the development of our company's organ simulators, our engineers and technicians corresponded with dozens of technically-inclined musicians (or maybe musically-inclined technicians!) around the world with a serious interest in pipe organ music. We exchanged information on synthesizing stops, sampling stops, editing samples into organ stops, and a host of other related issues. We swapped samples from Sydney-area pipe organs in exchange for samples from European and American pipe organs. Clearly this kind of open source community does not form without a significant number of technically and musically trained people being concerned with the preservation of organ and organ music as living art forms. Robert Ampt, in his book *The Sydney Town Hall Organ*, states, "The organ must be known and loved for its repertoire, otherwise it may simply fade into inconsequentiality." Certainly the people we collaborated with are of a similar opinion.

Classical organ has survived for hundreds of years without sentimental value. When one thinks objectively about it, theatre organ is really just a variety of pop or entertainment organ. Outside its "golden age", how popular can it be? Well, the classically trained organist Garth Hudson toured with a *Lowrey Festival* (electronic theatre organ) during the 1960s and 1970s with a rock group simply known as *The Band*. They played a 1973 concert at Watkins Glen, New York, which drew an audience of over 600,000 people. *The Band* made famous such songs as "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down", "The Great Pretender", and "Georgia On My Mind". In an interview published in the December 1983 issue of *Contemporary Keyboard* magazine, Hudson says: "I actually preferred listening to and playing on tracker-action pipe organs, but then I became interested in the theater organ, with the Vox Humana, the Tibias, and so on. I never actually played a gig on

a theater organ, but I have played on various old clunkers. The American Theatre Organ Society deserves a lot of credit for restoring so many of them."

One of the authors of this article attended one of the Virgil Fox concerts at the Fillmore East in the late 1960s. Using an analog electronic Rogers touring organ, Virgil Fox played a (mostly) Bach program to tens of thousands of people - mostly teenagers. This went on night after night. Billed as "heavy organ" (truth in advertising, indeed!), these legendary performances included a light show (TOSA could do this too, particularly with today's technology). These concerts no doubt created a legion of Bach fans. For many, it was their first exposure both to the organ's true musical potential and to the music of great organ composers.

More recently no less than three TOSA NSW committee members attended a concert by the British rock group YES and their organist, Rick Wakeman. Over 10,000 people filled the Sydney Entertainment Centre in September 2003 (and paid an average ticket price of around \$100) for a concert in which organ was prominent. The concert included a 15 minute organ solo and another 25-30 minute section of organ and pitched percussions. Lighting effects were competent but not overwhelming. Although in this instance, Rick Wakeman did not use a pipe organ, his electronic touring rig used mostly pipe-like sounds (but he has toured in the past with a pipe organ). Much of the performance was his own compositions. Some were quite recent; all were quite good. Some might be interested to learn that he and another

member of YES played at a local city venue the following afternoon.

Examining the common threads to the most successful organ concerts, we find:

(a) They play to the organ's strengths in textures, complex harmonies, and profound bass.

(b) They often include other instruments to compensate for the organ's weaknesses in percussions, rhythm, and expressive soloing.

(c) The musical program is approximately 1/3 from the past, 1/3 current popular music, and 1/3 new (original) material.

Just how to "get the word out" and promote organ to a wide demographic remains unclear. Your insights and comments would be most welcome. Let's get an active discussion going!

ORGANS and ORGANISTS

NEWS FROM
ALL OVER

From John Andrews :

The Wurlitzer Style 260 [Special], Opus 2040, installed in the 2,500-seat Regent Theatre,

Brisbane in time for its opening in November 1929, is to be restored by the Queensland Art Gallery, with the assistance of a fundraising campaign conducted by the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation over the next few months.

The organ will be restored and installed as a working instrument in one of the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art's cinemas (located at Kurilpa Point, South Brisbane).

"Special" denotes the Diaphone extension to 32'; and the provision of a grand piano.

The installation aims to create an environment for silent cinema to be presented in a historically accurate yet contemporary context - alongside other

visual arts media of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Gallery's restoration will retain all of the essentials of the 1929 organ [air console, relays, unaltered stoplist, etc.].

The organ is complete, except for the grand piano, which was removed from the Regent Theatre prior to the organ's purchase by Dr Keith King of Lawson, NSW. There is interest to locate the piano if possible.

The photograph (below left) is of the just-unpacked console, probably outside the Brisbane premises of the installers, B.B. Whitehouse Bros.



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GREAT ORGAN DAYS BY SAN FRANCISCO BAY

48th ANNUAL CONVENTION - 2003 AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY - PART 3

by Allan Brooker



The Castro Theatre Interior

Hazleton (right) "A Master of the King of Instruments" according to the *Los Angeles Times*, at the wonderful Castro Theatre which was also designed by Timothy Pflueger.

The *Wurlitzer* (right), originally from the Detroit State Theatre is now a 4/23 with the recent addition of a Tuba Mirabilis and still operates on the original relay system. Before Tom's performance, it was announced that he had been inducted into the ATOS Hall of Fame and was presented with a plaque honouring the occasion by new ATOS president, Father Gus Franklin.

"All's Fair in Love and War" started the show, which soon led into Tom's famous Moon medley "How High the Moon", "Blue Moon", "Moon River", "Paper Moon", "Moon Glow", "The Moon Was Yellow".

The Castro *Wurlitzer* (right) has never sounded better and all due to the loving care given to it by the owners, Raymond Taylor and family and leading pipe organ technicians, Dick Taylor and Ed Stout. The theatre itself has already had advanced restoration work done with all new comfortable seating and new interior lighting. Now splendid movie palace, the Castro is open 365 days a year and has twice-nightly organ intermissions.

(Tom announced he had released a new recording, not on this organ, but on the former New York Paramount "studio organ" which now resides in the small Bay Theatre at Seal Beach. In fact, Jonas Nordwall also has released a recording on this organ, now boasting 50 ranks. Both are excellent CD's and are known as *The Paramount Days, Signature Series* and are collector's items already as on the first production copies the "Z" and "T" have been transposed in the word *Wurlitzer*, both on the CD itself and the liner notes)



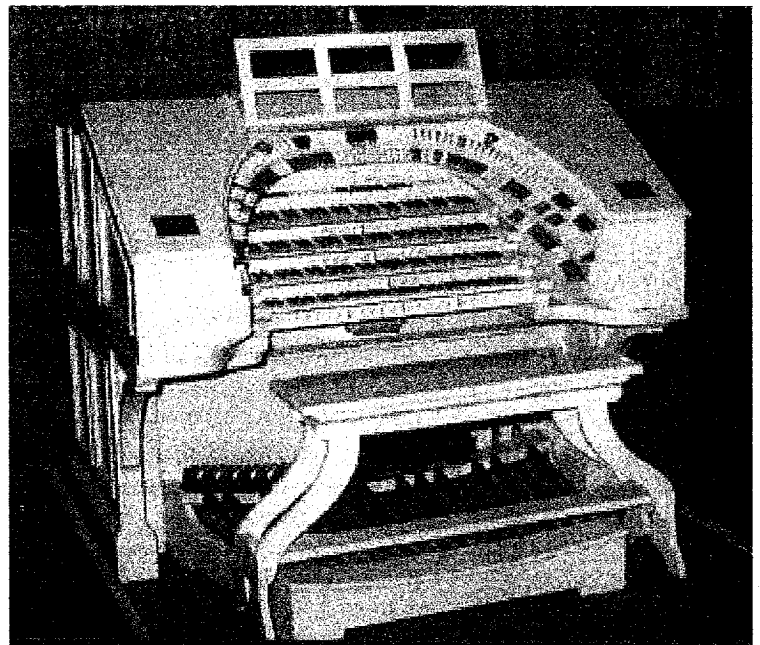
Back to Tom's wonderful performance and a change of pace with "Elite Syncopations" and "Tea for Two" that he does so well. Part two started with "Whitehall Guild March" and then softening the program with such sentimental tunes as "The Perfect Song", "This Nearly was Mine" and leading into a fabulous Cole Porter medley.

Tom concluded his memorable concert on this immaculate *Wurlitzer* with a very appropriate encore "The Song is Over, (but the Memory Lingers On)".

Our afternoon artist was the first of two British players, the enormously talented Simon Gledhill (left) back at the Oakland Paramount. I had a brief conversation with him the day before, when he mentioned he had come down with a bad summer cold. What rotten luck! He had been rehearsing all afternoon at the Paramount assisted by Jim Riggs who was feeding him box loads of tissues.

He might have been feeling lousy, but it did not show! "Put on a Happy Face" was his console raiser followed by a gorgeous version of "Smoke Gets in Your

DAY FIVE
was to be a day so filled with talent that one's senses almost went into overload. We were to cross the Bay Bridge for the only time of the convention for our first artist of the day, the fabulous Tom



Eyes". British composers were not forgotten as he played Stanley Wyllie's novelty piece, "Poodle in the Park".

Simon also paid tribute to the former house organist who had warmed the very bench he was sitting on, Jim Roseveare, with his version of "Two Cigarettes in the Dark". Simon's concentration is so intense he seems to go into an almost trance-like state and it's hard to find another performer so at one with the organ than he.

After an intermission spent exploring that wonderful Paramount Theatre I was eager to get back to Simon's enthralling program. Once again, with another organist there was another "sound" on the same instrument we had heard a couple of days ago. "I Feel a Song Coming On" blending beautifully into "With a Song in My Heart" and ushered us into the second half of the show. Simon brought back memories of Judy Garland in a bracket he has recorded and called appropriately, "A Garland of Judy".

Those of us who can remember the morning radio show on the ABC, the *Hospital Hour* were reminded of the theme tune "Melody on the Move" which I believe is somewhat tricky to play, but handled beautifully by Simon. There were too many wonderful pieces to recall individually, but his final piece, as is Simon's way, was an overture, "The Thieving Magpie" performed brilliantly.

Simon, a banker in everyday life, had to head back to work in the UK next day, so his encore was appropriately "Hurrying Home".

With the evening show being the last of the main convention, one could be excused for thinking it could not get any better than we had already heard. How wrong one can be!



Our final artist was that 14 year old, 4-foot-nothing, chubby English kid, who in 1995 won the ATOS Young Organists Competition in Detroit, Richard Hills (left). Only thing was this was 2003 and that little "kid" had grown into a strapping 6-foot-plus, 22 year old, young man, who, such is his skill, has been appointed "Organ Scholar" to Westminster Abbey. Translated, that effectively means Deputy to the Chief Organist. What an honour!

This was also the young man who literally "stole the convention" with his spectacular performance at the Oakland Paramount, back in 1998. I think since that amazing concert, all the other regulars on the convention circuit have sharpened up their acts considerably (it was either that or assassinating Richard - I'm glad they chose the first option).

Richard's concert brought us back to the Berkeley Wurlitzer with "It's Foolish, But it's Fun" as the gorgeous Radio City Center console arose again from the depths. A more serious piece, "There's a Place in my Heart for You", preceded a "Viva Mexico" bracket and then the delightful fun piece "Remember Me?". We did not need much convincing that this young man had total control over this wonderful instrument as he extracted more and more amazing sounds out of those chambers. "Smash and Grab" was the ideal number to demonstrate flying fingers! An extended medley from *The King and I* brought the first half to a close.

British music was not to be overlooked as "Covent Garden" and something from the light music classics, "At the Dance"

opened the second half. The ladies were then remembered with a medley of them, "Thoroughly Modern Millie", "Diane", "Nola" and "Vanessa".

One often finds in young organists, that they can be tempted into over using the "big guns" like the thunderous 32 foot stop, but not so Richard. Oh yes, he used it all right, but judiciously and at just the right moment with spectacular effect! "Twilight Time" demonstrated the softer moods of the organ and all too soon we were into Richard's final selection and one that he has recorded as "A Jolson Jamboree" remembering the great Al Jolson.

To raucous applause, Richard was coaxed back for an encore and proved he is still a kid at heart with a rollicking "Rock Around the Clock". This young man is just sensational!

And so, with the last day of the convention treating us to three of the great theatre organists around, today, the main part of the convention was over. I was impressed with all the venues, excellent, highly talented artists and well prepared and behaved organs. I don't recall hearing a single cipher on any organ! The best part of all was no unnecessary, associate artists - just top-rate organists playing beautiful theatre organ music as God intended.

Many thanks go to the Nor-Cal Theatre Organ Society and all the countless people behind the scenes for a wonderful 48th Annual Convention.

(And thank you to Allan for taking the time to write such an interesting report for the enjoyment of all our members)

Review of TOSA'S SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

PRESENTED BY JOHN ATWELL WITH THE SYDNEY WEST SINGERS

Orion Centre Campsie

by Doug Grant

Sunday 7th December 2003

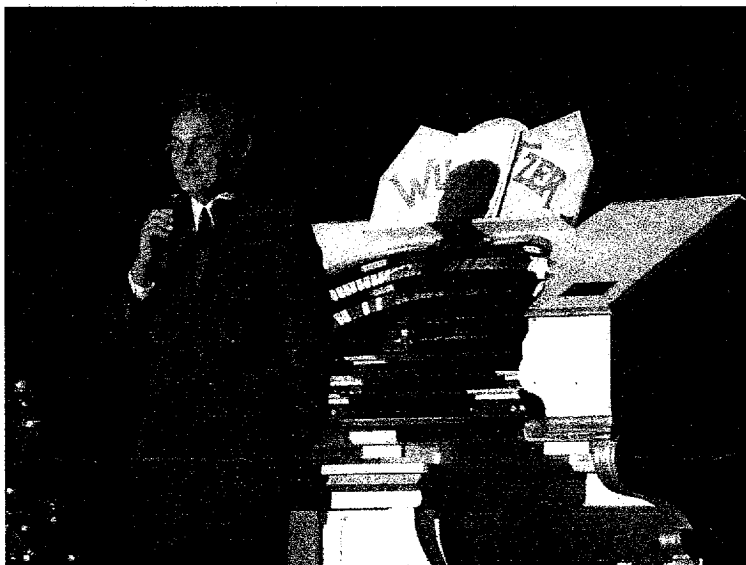
Once again, Melbourne's loss was Sydney's gain when John Atwell ventured across the border to host TOSA's Special Christmas Concert for 2003 at the Orion Centre.

An audience of around 400 people gave John a rousing reception as he rose from the pit at the console of the 3/17 Wurlitzer to the strains of Cole Porter's *Another Opening of Another Show*. The arrangement featured variations on the theme from bouncy to bluesy, but ending with a suitably big sound.

John's opening remarks made reference to previous Christmas concerts he had jointly presented with Tony Fenelon, but this year he was to be joined by the Sydney West Singers. He began the concert with a march from the pen of one-time TOSA performer, Jim Riggs, with the *Motion Picture Herald's March*. John mentioned that he had virtually adopted this march as his signature tune for his performances at Melbourne's Regent Theatre. The march was a fine start for the program, providing ample opportunity to exploit the more brassy sounds of the organ.

Next on the agenda was a cute little novelty piece from British theatre organist Stanley Wyllie with *Poodle in the Park*. The piece opened with a melody reflecting on Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, and even had a snippet of *La Marseillaise*. John gave the item a very pleasant airing with a nice jaunty rhythm.

Next item was, as John described it, an example of the George Wright school of bump and grind. He made the 3/17 disport itself with *I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby* from the pens of Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh. Even Fields and McHugh



would have approved of the delicious, sleazy sounds coaxed from the organ and the piano. Even *The Stripper* would have been pleased.

An item from the Marx Brothers' 1937 movie *A Day at the Races* followed with John's version of *All God's Chillun Got Rhythm* which produced an easy swing and happy memories of the last of the Brothers' really funny movies. For some reason, this number has some melody lines reminiscent of *Put on a Happy Face!*

At this stage, John introduced his associate artists, the members of the Sydney West Singers under the direction of their conductor, Brian Hughes. The group comprised 18 voices - 12 women and 6 men. They opened their segment with a restrained version of *Quoniam cum Sancto Spiritus* by Vivaldi. The next item in



the Singers' bracket was an impressive rendition of *Shirna* from *Riverdance*. The organ accompaniment was augmented by a Celtic drum played by a member of the Singers. It was also noted that the organ provided a simulated bagpipe drone, adding to the authenticity of the Celtic arrangement. The Singers then moved into a novelty piece based on the theme of *Chopsticks*, with cleverly woven lyrics featuring the names of Santa's reindeer. The final item of the Sydney West Singers'

first bracket was the wonderful *One Day More* from Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg's *Les Misérables*, which featured some solo voices of the choir. It was a remarkable feat that the Singers had only had one morning in which to rehearse with the organ, and John demonstrated his skill and sensitivity in providing a fine, accurate balance between the Singers and the organ.

Cole Porter's music was again prominent as John moved into a medley of songs from *Can Can*. He prefaced his performance with a comment that he and his wife would be celebrating the New Year in Paris. His well constructed medley included the items *Can Can*, *C'est Magnifique*, *I Love Paris*, *Montmartre*, *I Am in Love*, and *It's All Right With Me*. The organist's arrangements admirably reproduced the wonderful musicality of Cole Porter, from the big opening, through the lilting rhythms, bouncy numbers, and romantic measured-paced items, all punctuated by clever bridging modulations, ending with the appropriately big finish of *I Love Paris*. A most enjoyable performance.

Moving on to an item from *The Lion King*, John played *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*, the music being penned by Elton John. A delightful number, sympathetically played with a gentle flute-like opening,

building gradually to a grand-organ sound, and ending as gently as it began.

Then John moved on to an interesting march from the British light-music composer Frederick Curzon (who also played the organ), the *March of the Bowmen* from his orchestral *Robin Hood Suite*. The piece was reminiscent in form and content of *The Dam Busters' March* and *The Yeomen of England* with stirring melodies, and strident trumpet-like sounds. The conclusion featured some impressive pedal work from John, bringing the piece, and the first-half of the concert, to a great conclusion.

Pre-concert and interval music was provided on the grand piano in the Orion's foyer by Bill Schumacher and John Shaw respectively. The music from both these artists is always a delight to hear and only enhances the overall enjoyment of the event. It never ceases to amaze me how both these artists can maintain their performances when interrupted by well-meaning fans.

The opening of the second half of the concert was graced with the presence of Santa hurling edible projectiles at the believers and sceptics alike - a nice touch for Christmas. Santa also drew the winning numbers for the raffle to the pseudo-anonymous accompaniment of drum rolls and cymbal crashes from the basement.

Soon after, President Walter Pearce welcomed John Atwell back to continue the second half of his program. He opened with his clever arrangement of the Beatles' *Can't Buy Me Love*. John mentioned at the conclusion that he was still at school when that number first appeared. Sadly, many others in the audience (including the author) were well past their school days when this number first appeared in 1964.

Next item was a 1966 Beatles' number by Lennon and McCartney, *Here, There and Everywhere*. John produced a fine rendition with a lovely soft introduction, a slow-measured crescendo, and ending as it began, softly and sensitively.

The Sydney West Singers returned for their second bracket commencing with a West Indian Christmas carol, *The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy*. This was a delightful



variation from the conventional old-faithfuls, performed by the choir complete with calypso rhythms, and ably accompanied by the organ.

The next item opened with the joyful soprano exclamation of *Glaudeamus*, preceding the glorious introduction of the full organ in its church mode, playing the piece that is otherwise known as *The Processional* from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*. The Singers acquitted themselves admirably with this very moving piece, reminding us of the marriage of Maria and Captain von Trapp in the Abbey.

Jerry Herman's *We Need a Little Christmas* followed - a bouncy, lustily-sung Christmas song, as was the next Christmas song, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*, skilfully sung as an *a-capella* version.

The Singers' final item for the bracket was Handel's *The Hallelujah Chorus*. To tackle such a major work is no mean feat, but to convincingly perform it with such a small group was a major achievement. The complex contrapuntal sections of the *Chorus* require precision in rhythm and pitch, something which the Singers achieved admirably. Similarly, the accompaniment provided by John admirably supported the choir, providing a thrilling sum-total finale, warmly acclaimed by the audience.

John continued his solo performance with Mel Tormé's delightful *The Christmas Song* featuring his characteristic walking-pace accompaniment, avoiding the big-finish and opting for the use of muted string sounds and a soft, delicate ending.

John included a very touching tribute to the memories of a recently

departed relative, and to TOSA's own, the late Peter Harding, with a performance of a piece attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach, *Bist de bei Mir (Be Thou but Near)*. He specifically referred to Peter's widow, Kath, who was in the audience. A more appropriate piece would have been hard to find, and John's tribute was performed with all his characteristic sensitivity.

Next item was under the guise of the theme adopted for the most recent Rugby World Cup, *I Vow to Thee My Country*, the music for which, was originally written by Gustav Holst and featured as the *Jupiter* theme in Holst's *The Planets Suite*. Again his rendition began gently, rising to a crescendo, and ended with strings and flute-like registrations - another lovely arrangement.

As his finale, John chose to play the *Waltz* from *Eugene Onegin* by Tchaikowsky. This wonderful finale piece is replete with the gorgeous melodies and rhythms for which Tchaikowsky was so admired. The transcription from the orchestral version that John chose to use was beautifully played with sensitivity, accuracy and restraint. The success of his rendition was noted from the author's seating position in the Orion, with the multiplicity of heads nodding to the infectious rhythms and melodies of the *Waltz*.

It is worth noting just how fine the organ was sounding - a tribute to both the organist and its keepers (Neil Palmer *et al*).

The Sydney West Singers returned to the stage for a combined vocal/organ encore, which was duly provided with a very interesting arrangement of *Jingle Bells*, complete with 4-part harmonies, impressive key changes, and lots of bells. The audience amply rewarded John Atwell and the Sydney West Singers with steady, sustained applause till the last choir member had left the stage, and the organ and its master sank out of sight.

A final note of commendation should go to the lighting staff who provided well designed lighting effects throughout the concert, never obtrusive and always sensibly conceived.

Photos by Barry Tooker

TOSA's Next Artists Are A Great Young Theatre Organ Duo : Ryan Heggie and Michelle Nicolle

Ryan and Michelle met through TOSA (SA), where they were both introduced to Theatre Organ. They have now been living in Cobar, NSW, for the past 12 months, where Ryan is a Dentist and Michelle teaches Year 5 at St John's Catholic School.

Music has always been Ryan's 'outlet', and he enjoys listening to, and playing, organ and piano music in his spare time. Whilst studying at a special interest music school, Ryan attained associate diplomas in organ performance with *Yamaha* and the A MEB (Australian Music Examinations Board).

In 1997 he won the *Intermediate* and *Overall* Divisions of the American Theatre Organ Society's Young Organist Competition, in Indianapolis, and played at the ATOS Convention in San Francisco the following year.

Ryan's musical taste is varied, and includes classical, jazz, and popular. He has played in numerous venues in Adelaide and interstate, both as a solo artist, and in a 'duo' capacity. When he can find the time, Ryan enjoys 'dabbling' in photography, aquariums, and camping.

Michelle began formal music training at the age of ten on electronic organ and was accepted into a Bachelor of Music (Performance) degree in 1996.

In 1997, Michelle won the Australian *Yamaha Electone* Concours and consequently represented Australia and South-East Asia in the world finals of the International *Electone* Concours in Tokyo, Japan. Michelle became interested in theatre organ in 1996, after hearing a concert on the Capri Theatre 4/29 in Adelaide.

In 2000, she won the ATOS *Senior* and *Overall* sections of the Young Theatre Organist Competition in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and in 2001 performed as a featured artist in the ATOS annual Convention held in Indianapolis.

Ryan and Michelle have enjoyed performing together in various venues in Adelaide and Ballarat. This will be their first performance together in Sydney.

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If you have never been to a TOSA Theatre Organ Concert before, here is your chance to hear two of Australia's finest young Theatre Organists, Ryan Heggie and Michelle Nicolle.

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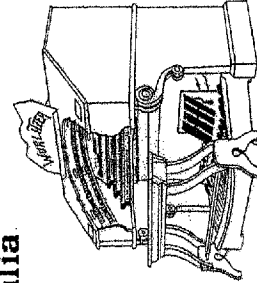
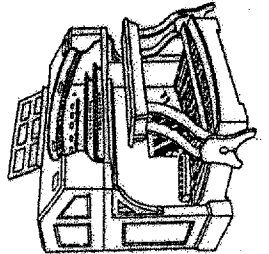
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