

# t.o.s.a. news

incorporating **THE DIAPHONE**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF  
AUSTRALIA, N. S. W. DIVISION

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## SOCIETY DIRECTORY

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

16th August, Friday, 7.45 p.m. Tony Fenelon will be playing at the Chatswood Civic Centre on the Lowrey Symphonic Theatre Console as a demonstration of this new model. Admission will be \$1.50 and 50¢ for pensioners and children. Tickets available from Rees Wills, 225 Clarence Street, Sydney, Alex Britton Hurstville, Flanagan and Winter, Parramatta. Also on the programme will be the Pied Pipers.

It is not often we have the opportunity to hear Tony (Australia's No.1 Theatre Organist) live in Sydney grab the chance while it presents itself.

18th August, 1974, Sunday 2 p.m. Bankstown Town Hall Theatre. Featuring Phil Crawshaw, who is a national finalist at the Yamaha Electone Festival in Melbourne, presents a concert on the Yamaha E5. Proceeds to our Capital re-building fund. The programme will be introduced by the Bankstown manager of Yamaha Music, Mr. Pat Quinn, who will also be featured on the programme at the Gilbranson Console. Tickets at the door; Adults - \$1.00, Children - 20¢. By attending this concert we not only will be well entertained but we will be assisting the Capitol Organ Fund.

11th September, Wednesday 8 p.m. We will have with us another visiting American Organist, Mr. Bill Thompson at our 2/10 Marrickville Wurlitzer Organ. Following the extremely successful visits of the two preceding American Organists this year if Bill Thompson is only nearly as enjoyable as Jonas Nordwall and Byron Melcher then we have got a programme in September that we all must attend and bring our friends too.

13th September, Friday: Home Organ Party at Mark Gabriels, featuring Eric Smith and a feature of the evening will be a screening of the film starring Lon Chaney "Phantom of the Opera" with Eric's accompaniment at the Organ - all proceeds to the Capitol Organ Fund.

14th September, Saturday: David Parsons, Organ Party at Beecroft.

15th September, Sunday: Eric Smith at the 2/10 Christie in the Lyceum Theatre at 3 p.m. in the regular Lyceum platform. One of the highlights of the occasion will be the complete performance of Gershwin's most famous piece "Rhapsody in Blue" with Eric doing the piano solo part and Ian Tripet at the Yamaha Organ. Ian will also play on the Christie portion of the Gothic Suite by Boallmann. Eric will be heard in selections which he played at a concert hosted by TOSA Adelaide on the 2/12 Wurlitzer in Wyatt Hall.

22nd September, Sunday: Free concert at the Wurlitzer Organ in Marrickville Town Hall. Arrangements are in hand for the organist, Peter Held, to be recorded during this Sunday Afternoon Free Concert at our Wurlitzer, by the A.B.C. for future use. All these arrangements are the result of hard work carried out by Peter and we wish him every success.

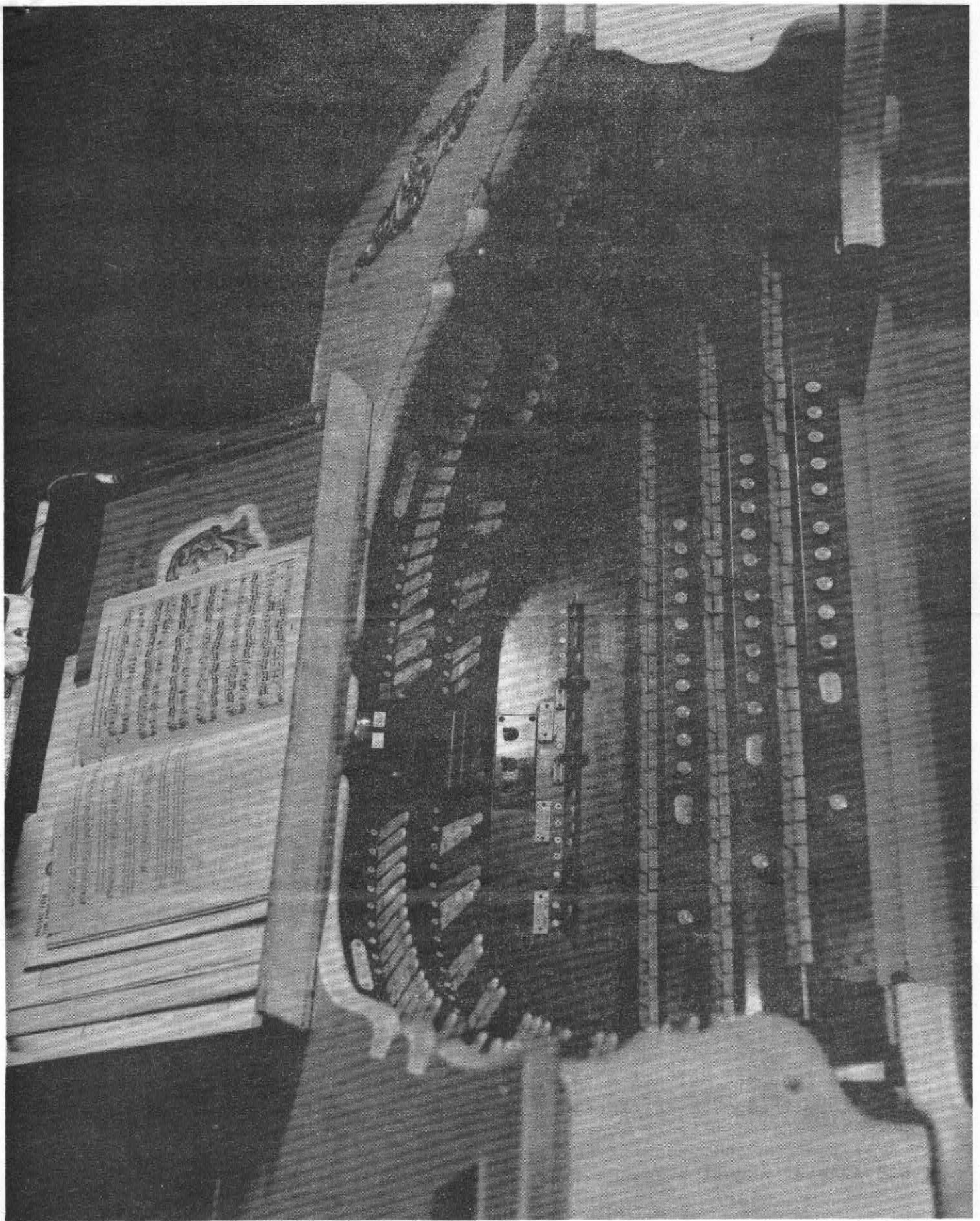
28th September, Saturday: Home Organ Party at member Warren Robbins. Full details to be announced next issue.

20th October, Sunday: A Sunday picnic outing to Freeman's Waterhole.

26th November, Tuesday: Christmas Party-Cabaret-Smorgasboard at Marrickville Town Hall, featuring dancing for members and friends accompanied by various organists at the Wurlitzer.

#### MOOMBA FESTIVAL CONCERT

Several hundred visitors and local inhabitants heard our Sydney Organist Bill Schumacher play a concert at the Dandy Wurlitzer in June. Bill was accompanied by Tony Fenelon at the piano and from reports sifting through from down south it seems that it was a most enjoyable musical event. Bill Schumacher has since left Australia to attend the Detroit ATOS convention and he meets up with Robert Gliddon in America and they will both be writing some exclusive material for these pages. We all look forward to sharing the experiences that will be had by Robert and Bill. Incidentally during recent committee meetings letters have been received from members about the availability of overseas organ recordings and it is hopeful that an announcement to assist members who wish to purchase recordings not available in Australia will be made next month.



## EDITORIAL

The photograph in this issue is of the Capitol 3/15 Wurlitzer Console taken some years ago. You can see in the photograph the keyboards condition when the Society began working on the instrument. This is not the condition the Console was in when the society purchased the organ as already many hours of work and a lot of money had been spent by the hard working maintenance crew, led by Barry Tooker. As you have read in these pages the negotiations with Hurstville Municipal Council are proceeding to a conclusion at a rapid pace now but our financial and physical efforts are not over yet. We have a lot to before we have the magnificent Capitol organ playing once again. The organ parties which many among us hold are a wonderful success both with the fellowship they allow us by getting the members together in small intimate groups, where everyone gets to know one another and also they are a financial gem as this last month alone has seen over \$130 banked in the Capitol Organ Fund, bringing the balance to nearly \$950. This is the way we can do the job in hand and people who have been involved so far and can get involved in the future are to be congratulated as I think the only way to make the Capitol re-installation a success right from the start is the long hard costly way.

## NOTE TO THE TRADE.

Advertising arrangements can be made by contacting the editor.

## HAMMOND ORGAN CONCERT.

We have news from Vera Dusting of the Hammond Organ Society's next get-together and this will be at Mr. and Mrs Wilson's home at 108 George Street, Hunters Hill on 23rd August and members of the Theatre Organ Society will be made most welcome. For further information contact George or Vera Dusting on 570 1296.

## ORGAN PARTY AT HERBERT WYATT'S - D.R.

A great variety of musical entertainment was available on the evening for 40 guests at our President's home on July 13th. The evening got away to a good start with member Jim Patrick who really put some effort into his programme. Next to occupy the organ stool was Warren Robbins whose smooth technique and enlightened registration made very easy listening. Definitely a "chip off the old block". A very enjoyable vocal interlude was provided by a friend of long standing for many TOSA members, Maurie Rogers. Maurie is a well known figure in the music and drama scene and has taken various prominent roles in local musical productions. Last but not least, our president addressed the Conn and carried us back through "memory lane" then forward to the songs of today - Jonathan Livingston Seagull - and judging by the tumultuous sounds of applause, left no doubt in the minds of those present that Herbert has definitely been doing his homework. Thanks to Mona and Herbert a splendid evening and the Capitol Organ Fund is now more than \$40.00 richer.



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### STATE THEATRE CONCERT K.E.

Perhaps spurred by the editorial of the June TOSA News, a large number of new faces joined the Icebergs Division of TOSA and braved a cold Saturday morning on June 22 to witness what may have been the last recital on Australia's only remaining "as built" theatre organ. Patron, Ian Davies, played the State Theatre 4/21 Wurlitzer - a fittingly nostalgic programme with a touch of pop for balance. With house lights dimmed, and chamber lights on, it was possible for members to view the operation of the shutters (not normally visible) through the ornate State Ceiling. Very effective spot lighting of the white console was provided by Robert Weismantel and Jack Lawson.

### ERIC SMITH ON THOMAS - K.E.

Friday June 28 saw another of the fine Mini-concerts being presented by Ritchie Willis and Norm Read at their Paddington home. Organist Eric Smith gave 25 enthusiastic fans a preview of his forthcoming Adelaide tour programme on the Thomas "Laurence Welk" organ and added variety by playing "musical chairs" between that instrument and Ritchie's "Gulbrandsen" Player piano. Included in the programme were ever popular Smith favourites like "Life is nothing without Music", "Of Thee I Sing", "Foggy Day" and a new piece "South of the Alps Suite" which is so "Eric Smith" that it's bound to become part of his permanent repertoire.

Broadway was well represented by selections from "Paint Your Waggon"

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and "No Business Like Show Business". Gershwin, of course, was well represented, the piano interpretation of "The Man I Love" being particularly moving. Eric hopes to visit the great master in the USA in the near future.

The evening finished with the inevitable requests and Eric ably re-established his reputation as an improviser by tackling the Hallelujah Chorus on the short domestic keyboards and pedalboard.

Our President, who was present, spoke of the amazing variety of music so expertly and happily presented, and, in the case of the "Warsaw Concerto" so vigorously played was tumultuously approved.

A very hearty vote of thanks concluded the programme.

## MEMBER'S LETTER.

As one of the maintenance group of the State Theatre Organ Preservation Group it was gratifying to see the roll up at the State Theatre on Saturday 22nd June when almost 100 people braved the winter elements to travel from as far away as Newcastle to enjoy the performance by our Patron, Ian Davies, which must have brought back a few nostalgic memories to those present who can remember these magnificent instruments being played in this manner every day. The group are proud to be connected with the State Organ as it is now the only Theatre Organ in Australia in its original installation as well as being in the most lavish movie palace in the country.

On behalf of the group I wish to thank all who attended, and through the generosity of Greater Union we hope to be able to see you there again before the end of the year.

Organically yours,  
Jack Lawson.

## OBITUARIES

### ALF BROADBENT

We were very sad to learn of the recent death of Mr. Alf Broadbent of Macclesfield, South Australia, who passed away suddenly in June.

Alf was a keen member of TOSA for many years, his interest in Theatre Organ music resulted in the purchase of the Photoplayer instrument from the Seaview Theatre Glenelg, which he installed in a shed on his farm at Macclesfield. He devoted much of his time in recent years to making extra ranks of pipes (some of Papier Mache, and cardboard) for the organ to bring it to its present size of over 900 pipes, and to extending his collection of rolls for the organ, making some of them by hand! Alf very kindly allowed TOSA South Australia to include an inspection of his instrument in the programme of this year's Easter Convention. He will be greatly missed by those who knew him and we extend our sincere sympathy to his family.

#### TOM STAPLETON

Long time member of Sydney TOSA Division, Tom Stapleton, passed away last month leaving his wife Patty and two young children - our most sincere sympathy to them. Tom was a cousin of Past President, Neville Wright and though only in his early forties he suffered with high blood pressure. Tom's friendship and fellowship will be sadly missed by those members who were close to him and his family.

#### THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ORGAN

Although it is not really the type of organ which we are mainly interested in, the organ being built for the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall has some interesting points worth discussing especially when its builder claims that it will be the largest "tracker action" organ in the world and in press reports we learn that it will have everything including a kitchen sink for the tuner to wash his hands. According to the Sydney Organ Journal of October 1973 "The Organ is following the Opera House tradition of time, cost and controversy. It has already been under way for five years and is not scheduled for completion until August/September 1976. The estimated cost has risen from \$295,000 in 1968 to \$400,000 in 1971 to \$600,000 earlier this year and may rise even further. (Changes in design account for some of these increases, and over \$100,000 is reported to be Australian import duty on foreign made pipes and other parts). When completed the organ will contain 127 stops, 205 ranks and about 10,500 pipes.

Critics have complained (and no doubt will continue to do so) about the cost and size of the instrument. For example, Michael Dyer wrote to the Sydney Morning Herald on 2 September 1970 on these matters, and also the fact that, after appointing Peter Hurford as Consultant, the Opera House authorities accepted their consultant's advice! ("One hears nothing of any quotes from other firms, nor can one be certain that the situation has been fully explored. To award a huge contract on the advice of a visiting English organist making sweeping claims about the finest organs in the world doesn't make sense, artistically or commercially. I am amazed at the size of the proposed instrument - it seems out of touch with contemporary thought in organ building"). A second letter on 29th September 1971 repeated some of these complaints. Perhaps Mr. Dyer feels he should have been consulted?

During a recent interview with Ron Sharpe, the organ builder, your editor has obtained a bit of useful information about the organ and its construction including a specification which will not be published here, however it may be sufficient to mention that the organ will have the following divisions, Ruckpositiv, Brustwerk, Hauptwerk, Oberwerk, Kronwerk and that the stops list will include Schwebung, Rauschpfeife, Scharff, Terzian and Grossterz which should keep the local organists thinking.

The organ is being constructed in a shell shaped concrete, open-fronted chamber 46ft high and stands on a cantilevered steel platform which overhangs the audience seating. The depth of the pipe chamber is approximately 18 ft. The console is located on an extension of the organ platform and is approximately 6 ft. in front of the organ. Access to the organ is from outside the Hall, up a spiral staircase to the rear of the organ chamber. The organist then walks through the pipework to the console some 30 ft above the main floor of the hall.

The largest pipes of the organ belong to the Prinzipal 32' the lowest four are constructed of 2" thick marine plywood and are hung on the rear wall. Because of the distance of the console from the conductor two closed circuit television screens give the organist views of the conductor and the stage a telephone is included from the conductor and stage manager and a microphone to enable the organist to speak over the public address system.

The frequency range of the organ is from 16.35 Hz (32 feet) to 16,744 Hz (1/32 ft 3/8").

Ron tells us that the overall concept was to approach the design and voicing of the organ from a detached musical point of view; from the position of a listener accustomed to orchestral and recital concerts rather than from the position of an organ enthusiast or that of a trained organist who expects certain traditional concepts; a view of balance, blend, freedom from harshness and extraneous noise, a singing quality.

The voicing of the Hauptwerk and Positiv will be similar except that the Hauptwerk is larger scaled and on a higher wind pressure, therefore being slightly louder; so that by selection of the appropriate Hauptwerk mixtures e.g. Scharff and Zimbel with the foundation stops, an Italian-like plenum is possible, though without the possibility of adding individual ranks of upper pitches.

The speech and tone of the whole organ is unforced, so tending to be inoffensive and not tiring to the ear. Adequate loudness and the effect of fulness is obtained by the fact that most upper ranks break back at the 1/8 ft pipe to the 1/4 ft pipe. This concentrates the highest proportion of energy of sound in the fundamental pitch range 2,000-5,000 Hz which, on the Fletcher-Munson curves is the area of greatest sensitivity of the ear. This breaking sequence spreads



the pitch range 2,000-5,000 Hz over the entire compass of the keyboard.

In the Hauptwerk (main organ chorus) the provision of many mixtures of different composition will allow formats resembling those of the Italian, French and German schools to be produced. Basically, this division is the builder's own concept of organ chorus and tone, containing elements of French, Italian and German character. The Oberwerk is contained in a swell box which has, as well as the main front shutters, a separate set of shutters opening at the rear of the box for echo effect. Essentially it is North German Schnitger in tone, with elements of French romantic school. In the Rückpositiv which is basically Italian in concept there is contained elements of French and German character.

The swell shutters in the Brustwerk enclose it within the lower case of the organ and it is basically a Cornet depicting the classical French echo Cornet. It also contains examples of early German short length reeds. Above the Oberwerk is the Kronwerk which is basically a solo department. It contains three ranks of brilliant sounding trumpets and a Vox Humana all "en Chamade", that is, lying horizontal and pointing directly into the Concert Hall. There is also a powerful twelve-rank Cornet and a Ophicleide of sonorous quality.

The Pedal contains a cross section of the elements of typical French, English and German classifications, plus additional and separated synthesizing upper partials of the fundamental pitch in order to produce, in the ear of the listener, a resultant fundamental of high power. The builder feels that this is musically preferable to gaining fundamental strength in the bass by the use of excessively energised large pipes. In the latter case, the absorption of the room acoustics in the very low organ bass range would require such a large energy input to the large pipes that the upper harmonics would become harsh and unblending. The pedal does in fact have large scaled heavyweight 32 ft and 16 ft ranks, but the energy input to these is sufficient only to provide a pure foundation of moderately low power which may be used with the softest stops of the organ. Increase in power is then obtained by reinforcement of the harmonics by the upper ranks.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE.....

### STATE THEATRE MYSTERY SOLVED

Once upon a time the 4/21 Wurlitzer in our magnificent State Theatre Sydney had attached to it, electrically, a grand piano, which resided in one of the alcoves, which are on either side of the proscenium. Some years ago the piano vanished and in recent times certain people have been accused of having lifted the instrument. It's disappearance has caused much speculation over a good number of years until recently it was suggested on the "grapevine" that due to the fact that the Elvy organisation used to have the constant job of maintaining the pianos and other musical instruments for Union Theatres it may be that Elvy's would remember the piano.

A telephone call by your editor to Mr. Elvy Snr, confirmed just that. Mr. Elvy remembered the piano and that they had bought it some 20 years ago from Greater Union. The piano was stripped by the Elvy workshop of all the superfluous mechanism and the piano was later sold as a standard Wurlitzer Grand.

Mr. Elvy said that he wouldn't know what happened to the parts that were taken out and the people that were responsible for doing the job have now passed on and it is very likely that all the playing mechanism, magnets, cable, etc, were sent out to the rubbish tip. Another saga in the incredible story of events that happen to this newest of musical instruments. When one year the installation at Moorabbin Town Hall (Ex State Theatre, Melbourne) complete with its grand piano it makes one realise that preservation groups like ourselves should have been organised years earlier.

### JANUARY "CONSOLE " ARTICLE.

An article appearing in the January issue of Console Magazine advised readers that the "SYDNEY STATE MAY COME DOWN" and goes on to state that the theatre is closed and only to be opened for one week to the public for Wurlitzer concerts. This information is purported to have been gleaned from the pages of TOSA News, which leads one to believe that "Chinese Whispers" can be played very effectively in print as well as vocally.

This item is obviously a misunderstanding or misquote on their part but I feel that an obituary before the event is at any time a sobering affair especially as the patient in this case is struggling for life and still managing to survive SO FAR.