

# TOSA NEWS

July/Aug 2020  
Volume 59 No.5

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**Due to the Covid 19 virus we are considering the logistics necessary to hold the first concert for later this year.**

**We hope you enjoy the next articles from Reginald Foort in this issue.**

**American Organ Builder  
Ken Crome passed away in May this year. He was responsible for many theatre organ installations in the USA.**

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**TOSA News** David & Margaret Badman

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## President



Dear members, Yes, we are planning to have a concert in October and Simon Ellis and Glenn Amer have been "locked-in" for Sunday 11 October at Campsie, however...

Just when we thought Covid19 was being controlled things have kicked-off again. As I write the situation in NSW is declining daily it seems. As always the irresponsible actions of a few can ruin it for everybody. Therefore, at this time we cannot totally confirm that the October event will proceed but we still have time to plan.

At a recent members day at Campsie, Barry Tooker measured the space so that we may plan how seats will be laid out, how we manage audience movement and even details such as afternoon tea service. It can be complex.

It will be essential that every attendee is recorded so that we may comply with government contact tracing requirements – just in case. For existing members, we plan to have a membership list at hand and you will be marked "present". Please bring your membership card. All non-members will be required to provide individual names and contact phone numbers – that is four people = four names and four phone contact details.

Given the demographic of our audience the application of best practice for Covid19 management is essential

as I am sure you will agree. I too, subsequent to last year's episode, am also on the at-risk list.

We will be asking that you pre-purchase tickets online or phone (when tickets are made available – not yet) This will greatly assist in seating layout and crowd control. It may even be possible to pre-pay for afternoon tea when pre-purchasing tickets. Much more detail in the next TOSA News.

Looking forward to seeing you all in October as the late Jack Rose was oft heard to say "All things being equal".

Please stay safe and healthy.

Regards, Craig Keller.

## Editorial



Hello Members, I hope you all enjoy the articles about the late Ken Crome, who was one of the go to organ restorers in the USA. He carried on a business originally set up by his Grandfather, then taken over by his father and finally Ken. Whilst the original business worked on both church and theatre organs, Ken changed the focus to Theatre Organs only. In this issue, Reginald Foort, brings you a description of the modern electric action and of the unit system.

Please read the section "To Watch Out for" regarding the possibility of a concert at the Orion in October. Regards.

Editor TOSA News.

Enjoy the Music Live,

Ernie Vale

[editor@tosa.net.au](mailto:editor@tosa.net.au)

## From the Mailbox...



### Digital Lodgement National Library of Australia ISSN 2208-9098 (Online)

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

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit any submitted comments and, as always, the views expressed by any individual may not necessarily coincide with the views of TOSA NSW Div.

Please submit all comments via email to:

The Editor [editor@tosa.net.au](mailto:editor@tosa.net.au)  
or in writing to:

The Editor - TOSA News (NSW Div)  
PO Box A2322  
SYDNEY SOUTH, NSW, 1235

### Please Note Change to TOSA Bank Account

The Society's only bank account now is with **St George**. Details are **BSB 112-879, account number 442 088 530**

Please direct all payments to this account with St George Bank.

### Vale Jack Rose

Long time TOSA member, Jack Rose passed away recently. He and his late wife, Betty Rose,

were staunch supporters of TOSA and Theatre Organ for many many years. They both always had a cheery smile and were happy to say hello at concerts. Betty always helped on the afternoon tea and Jack on several occasions played Father Christmas at Christmas concerts. More details soon.

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### June Mystery Organist

I received 4 responses from members. John Batts and Peter Held identified the organist correctly as Lloyd Thomas. Cliff Bingham and Rob Gliddon felt the organist was Robinson Cleaver who had similar features to Lloyd Thomas. The organ is one of several Wurlitzers purchased for the Granada Theatre chain.

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### A Loud Organ

According to *Guinness World Records*, an outdoor organ constructed for Expo 2012, in South Korea, has produced tones measured at 138.4 decibels, exceeding levels recorded in the nineteen-seventies at performances by the likes of Led Zeppelin and The Who, and rivalling the noise generated by a jet engine on the tarmac.

*From member John Batts.*

***To Watch Out for  
You can now pay for  
tickets at the box office by  
credit or debit card***

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### **The next concert**

Your Committee are working out what actions we need to take in order to present a concert at the Orion Wurlitzer whilst complying with all conditions imposed as a result of Covid 19. One important condition is not handling cash money that may result in transferring the virus.

Consequently we ask members and non members to prebook tickets and pay for afternoon tea on-line through the TOSA Web site so we have both an idea of numbers attending and name and contact details as required by NSW Govt. Seating would be set out to comply with social distancing. Afternoon tea could be paid for when booking tickets to eliminate handling of cash and only two items will be provided on disposable plates covered with cling film.

TOSA Committee would appreciate you emailing to [membership@tosa.net.au](mailto:membership@tosa.net.au) or phoning Margaret on 0417971212 to indicate your interest in attending the concert. and booking on line.

This will allow names to be checked off more quickly as you enter the theatre

## **Advertising Rates in**

### **TOSA News**

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Quarter Page = \$25

Half Page = \$50

Full Page = \$100

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

### **Members' Playing Dates**

#### **The Orion Theatre Campsie Second Thursday of the Month**

**Player Days under Covid 19  
restrictions. Contact Craig  
or John to confirm dates for  
Orion. Convener is  
Craig Keller on 0418484798  
or John Batts on 0420424103**

**Marrickville Town Hall  
4th Monday afternoon/evening**

**No players days for the  
moment until the Corona  
Virus is well under control**

**Convener is  
John Batts on 0420424103  
will email you to confirm the day is  
available or  
Neil Palmer on 9798 6742 after  
7:00pm  
to confirm availability**

## Orion Members Day Thursday 9th July



TOSA Members Day at The Orion, Campsie, on Thursday 9th July was a pleasant occasion. The hoist performed and the system control for the Wurlitzer worked without unbidden murmur. Public Health restrictions were in place so that meant using hand-sanitizer for players and a dutiful wiping of the organ-bench, stop-tabs, the keys of the three manuals, and thumb-pistons between segments. Hot water was available, but members had been fore-warned to bring their own munchies and refreshment.

Those who enjoyed their time at the console were: **Eric Burwood, Graeme Costin, Kevin Eadie, Simon Ellis, Craig Keller, Doug Matthews** and your scribe (**John Batts**).



The society's official photographer and committee-man, Barry Tooker, also attended and took some pictures; also listening intermittently was Rhonda Furner, taking off some time from her law practice.

The music heard was the bewildering variety that is possible on a theatre-organ. It included Craig's commendable version of "Paddlin' Madeleine Home," interest in which has been stimulated by David Gray's CD recording of it at the Sanfilippo Wurlitzer (Eighty Shades of Gray); on the classical side there was Eric's playing of Schumann's "Traumerei"; then there was some jazzy playing by Kevin, especially in "Out of Nowhere"; and Graeme provided at least one good oldie to savour, "Slow Boat to China"; there was some incisive playing by Simon of what may have been ballet music; finally, Vera Lynn's recent passing did not go unnoticed.

It appears that the Wurlitzer's tuning is holding up well during this winter. In sum, and in contrast with the frustrations of the June meeting, a good TOSA session. Let's hope that Covid-19 will allow more activity in August.

jsb©2020/07/11.

(John S. Batts), Email: <theatreorganmagic@gmail.com>

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## **Vale Ken Crome USA**

*Comments by Walt Strony on the passing of Organ builder/restorer extraordinaire Ken Crome USA, May 1st 2020.*

Many of us are shocked and saddened by the passing of the legendary theatre organ expert Kenny Crome last night. Frankly, there is no one living that reached as many corners of the theatre organ world, in our lifetime, as Kenny did. He restored or rebuilt literally dozens, if not hundreds of theatre organs and/or restored or built MANY new consoles -- many of which concert artists play on a regular basis. In addition, he offered parts that no one else made. For example, the Piano pedals and mechanism that is used in my Allen STR4 signature model are made by his company. Kenny's passing will leave a major void in our world, and I'm not sure who will be able to replace him.

Kenny was like the Eveready Bunny. He kept going and going, at an energy level that most of us can only dream. Someone said that on a scale from 1-10, he was always at 11. While many

others are merely at 4-5. And he did this in spite of the many MAJOR health issues that he dealt with in the last 40(?) years. He lived to work.

While Kenny's reputation had been well established by the time I first came on the organ scene, it wasn't until 1984 that we ever worked together. Unfortunately, it was a situation that placed us both under duress. I had been engaged to play an organ dedication concert in Southern California. Unfortunately, the organ wasn't ready, and the installation was poorly planned/conceived. The installers knew they had a problem, and brought Kenny in at the last minute to get the organ playing. We got through the concert without killing anyone (or each other), but were both glad when it was over!

Over the years, our paths occasionally crossed whenever we were coincidentally in the same city. When I moved to Northern California, I occasionally visited his shop in Reno -- which is about 90 miles from here. A lunch usually followed with much information shared!

Here is one unfinished project that Kenny leaves. This is the Wurlitzer organ from Roosevelt Park in the LA area. It needs a home, but a big home! It has the largest 32' Diaphones made by Wurlitzer, that's part of one pipe to the right of the console...yes they come apart in sections. This organ is one of a kind, and begs for a restoration and home.





An instrument I was involved with near Cleveland, OH. The instrument was installed by Ed Zollman and his capable crew, with me as the consultant. The console was built by Ken Crome as a replica of the Brooklyn Paramount console. This was the first of many consoles that were "decorated" by Carlton B. Smith for Kenny. They had a long association, and Carlton considered Kenny his mentor all the way to the end.



## Show & Membership Prices

	All Artists
Non-members	\$40
Non-member Pensioner/Seniors Card holder	\$35
TOSA Members	\$25

**All Students FREE on confirmation of Student status**

**All Children FREE accompanied by an Adult**

Group Booking for 10 or more Adults      \$22 per person

First time Adult \$25 by completed Voucher at Box Office

### **New Membership Fees for 2020-21**

\$50.00 Full membership, \$40.00 Concession, Interstate or Overseas \$50. \$5 discount if TOSA News emailed to you

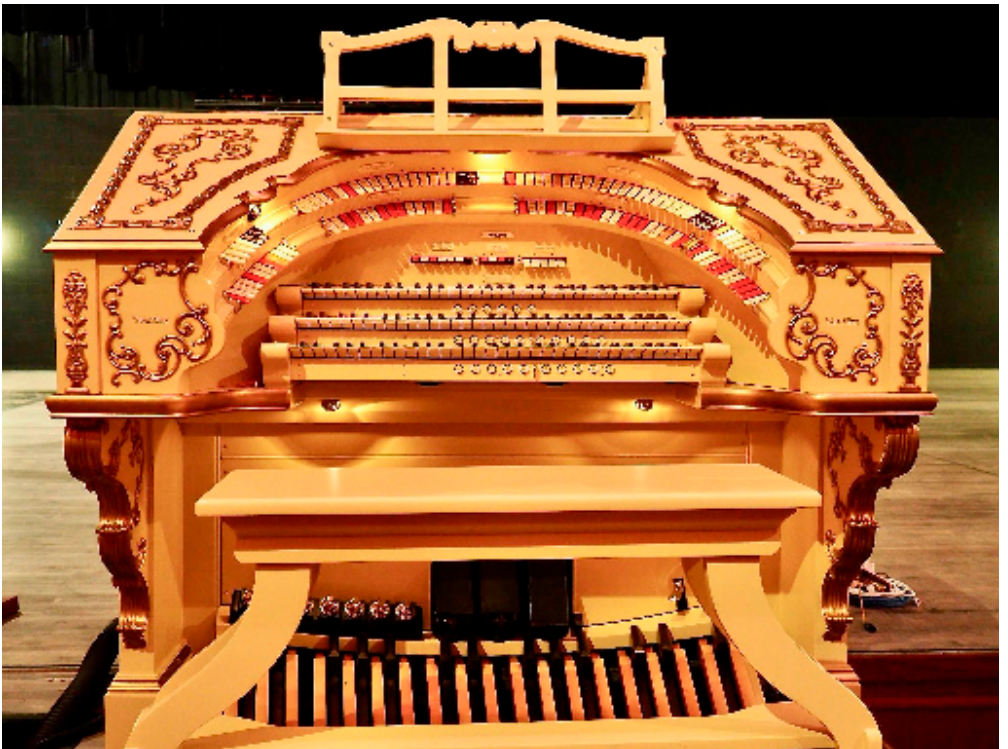
Membership enquiries David & Margaret Badman

(02) 4776 2192 [membership@tosa.net.au](mailto:membership@tosa.net.au)

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



Above is John Lauter playing the Wurlitzer organ in the Stahls Auto Collection near Detroit. Kenny Crome restored and installed this entire instrument.



Below left is the beautifully restored console in the Paramount Theatre, Cedar Rapids. Kenny restored this entire instrument.

I think it's safe to say that no one has made their mark on the theatre organ world as much as Kenny did, and there will never be another. Some one should do an inventory of the instruments he either rebuilt/installed or supplied a new/rebuilt console for. He was in a category all his own, and our lives have all been enriched by his MANY contributions to the art.



Above is a picture of the Sanfilippo console taken by Donnie Rankin. It is a stunning portrait. RIP Kenny Crome.

Kenny's final two projects are yet to be unveiled -- the restored Barton organ in Madison's Overture Center, formerly the Capitol Theatre, and the newly restored original console in the Oakland Paramount which will be unveiled shortly.

As a memorial to Kenny, I invite YOU to post as many pictures as you wish, of projects Kenny was involved in that affected you. RIP Ken Crome.

*Editor Note: I had the pleasure of meeting Ken Crome in person briefly after the session at Bandrika Studio, Pasadena on the Wurlitzer installed by Ken and played by Mark Herman. He was quite small in stature but a giant in the Theatre Organ restoration and installation business. He also built many organ consoles in both theatre and classical organ styles.*

## **Crome Organ Company**

The Golden Age of theatre organs is long past, but Reno's Crome Organ Co. finds a steady business in keeping musical history alive. The century-old family owned business is one of a small handful of companies that service, repair, restore and install theatre organs, which most people call pipe organs. "My grandfather, Edward Crome, learned the trade in San Francisco then worked for a firm in Chicago," said owner Ken Crome. "He moved to Los Angeles and started the company in 1895. My father Carl took over the business when he was 14 years old after my grandfather died."

The company once serviced concert, church and theatre organs, but Ken Crome sharpened its focus on theatre organs after he took the reins in 1973. By some estimates, about 7,000 pipe organs once entertained crowds in auditoriums, churches and movie houses. Now only about 40 are in their original venues, although private collectors have some.

"The golden age of theatre organs was before the talking movies were created. After that many theatres took their organs out. Still there were halls, auditoriums, as well as churches, that continued to use these organs," Crome said. In his younger days Crome used to help his father keep watch over the theatre organ at the MGM Studios. Now he's restoring that same organ for a new home at a private residence. Since the 1980s the company has been restoring organs owned by collectors and installing others back into theatres. Crome moved the company from Southern California to Nevada about 23 years ago. Working with him are assistants, Jay Bradley and Brett Fehlman.

Fehlman added the company wasn't hurt by the economic meltdown as it had a three-and-a-half-year backlog of work at that time.

"It's enough to keep us alive and make us very happy we're still working. We're really lucky in the fact that this company is considered probably one of the best in the country and a lot of people use us as a benchmark."

Last fall, Crome Organ finished a two-year project restoring a



theatre organ damaged in a flood at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Reinstalling the organ took well over a month as the chest, racks and effects had to be lowered through a door to their proper places. Then more time was required to tune the trumpets and connect all the lines.

Crome said he doesn't expect the business ever will boom. "It's steady but I don't see theatre organs becoming really popular as the average age of the crowds is rising," he says. "And I don't see young people getting involved."



### **Ken Crome is the person on the right**

*Ken Crome restored the Wurlitzer Console of the organ now owned by John Giacchi in Victoria affectionately named "Shirley" by John G. John advises he is making great progress on restoring the second Wurlitzer he purchased from the USA a couple of years ago. Editor.*

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An invitation to 'come over for a glass of sherry' promises a relaxed communion of friends, comfortable shoes, an old sweater, an occasion that no one will be using as part of life's strategic game plan."

GERALD ASHER

## For Sale

Conn 650 Theatre Organ with Custom built Leslie style speaker and bench.

The organ is working and in good condition, has just some minor marks from normal use.

It has a 32 note AGO pedal board and comes with the custom built Leslie style speaker cabinet.

Also included is a Service manual. - \$750 or nearest offer.

Michael Piquemal - 02 95332171 (Located at Beverly Hills 2209)



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**October concert at the Orion?**  
**Whether the concert with Simon Ellis and Glen Amer**  
**is to go ahead in October you will be advised**  
**in the September issue of TOSA News**

***Please see the information under the segment***  
***To Watch Out for***  
***in this issue and let Margaret Badman know if you are***  
***interested in attending***





**Articles from  
THE CINEMA ORGAN  
by**

Reginald Foort, F.R.C.O., A.R.C.M.

Second Edition

**THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN ELECTRIC ACTION**

Until about the middle of the nineteenth century the, only action used in organs was mechanical, known as "tracker" action; every single movement of any part of the interior mechanism of the organ, opening the pallets to allow wind to enter the pipes or moving the slides by which ranks of pipes were brought on or off, was done entirely by the physical strength of the organist's fingers or feet.

Thin "trackers" of wood, frequently many feet in length, were used as connecting rods between the various parts of the mechanism and the controls at the console, with the result that the touch of the keys was so heavy that any rapid playing was possible only to an organist whose fingers possessed the combined strength of Samson and Hercules!

In spite of the improvements which have taken place in organ action, the tradition of the heavy organ touch still lives in the mind of the "man in the street" to such an extent that, even now, I am frequently asked whether I do not find organ playing ruinous to my piano touch.

Although as early as 1852 a patent was taken out covering an electric connection between the keys and the pallets of an organ, and, in 1872, Willis employed tubular pneumatic action for his organ in St. Paul's Cathedral, it is only quite recently that all organs have come to be fitted with electric or pneumatic action.

The small two-manual organ on which I played for the services at school when I was eleven years of age, the organ at Newbold Parish Church, near Rugby, where I had my first organ appointment the following year, and the organ in Holy Trinity, Paddington, where I was assistant organist four years later, all had tracker action, and, to my dying day, I shall never forget trying to play the Finale from the *Reubke Sonata* at my audition on the last of these. It was a physical impossibility to push the notes down at all when the swell was coupled to the Great!

The earliest improvements in organ action, which aimed at substituting mechanically-produced energy to operate the various parts of the organ instead of having all the work done by the organists fingers, were in the direction of pneumatics.

The first invention of the kind was Barker's "pneumatic lever" action, which retained the long wooden trackers, but made use of pneumatic motors to provide the energy for operating them.

The next development was the "tubular pneumatic" action, in which pneumatic motors were fitted at the keyboard end and at the soundboard end of long metal tubes, so that when the organist pressed down a key, a pulsation of air was sent through one of the tubes to put into operation the motor attached to the pallet, thus operating the pallet and allowing wind to enter the pipe.

The tubular pneumatic system is still widely employed in church organs, and when the console is quite near the pipes, proves to be fairly satisfactory. Owing, however, to the time taken by the pulsations of air in travelling through the long metal tubes, it is far too slow for cinema organ work, where speed and rhythm are vital.

All modern cinema organs are built with either electro-pneumatic action, which is a development of Hope-Jones's ideas, or an all-electric action on the lines of the inventions of Mr. John Compton.

The touch and responsiveness of the modern cinema organ is an absolute joy. Although the pipes are invariably situated at a considerable distance from the player, they speak instantly he touches the key, the only "lag" being due to the time which the sound takes to travel from the pipes to the player; thanks to the modern action, it is easy to get accustomed to this, so that even the most rapid passages present no difficulty.

What the most eminent English organist who ever lived, W. T. Best, said about the tubular pneumatic action would most certainly not apply in the case of the modern cinema organ. On being asked his opinion about the newly invented tubular

pneumatic action of a concert organ he was asked to try, he replied: "it is a complete failure; you cannot play a triplet on the trumpet and I consider it the most damnable, invention ever placed inside an organ !"

The modern electric or electro-pneumatic action is not only absolutely instantaneous but is capable of the most amazing repetition. Any of the pipes, even the very big ones, can be made to play repeated notes as fast as on a piano. Indeed, the builders claim that their action is capable of repeating very many times faster than any human being's fingers could possibly accomplish. The result is that there is practically no music which is too fast or too difficult or too rhythmic to reproduce with ease on the cinema organ.

I can play with all the keyboards coupled together without any more effort than it takes to play on a single keyboard, and the touch is as light as a feather, far lighter than that of most pianos. Indeed, after playing such pieces as *The Bee's Wedding* or Chopin's *Minute Valse* on the organ for so many years, I find it very difficult to play them up to speed on the piano!

I wonder how many organists realize the debt they owe to Hope-Jones and the other pioneers for the revolution which they succeeded in bringing about with regard to the action of the organ?

## **A SIMPLE EXPLANATION OF THE UNIT SYSTEM**

ALTHOUGH the unit system has been almost universally adopted in the cinema organ and has begun to replace the orthodox system even in church organs, one of the questions which I am most frequently asked not only by the "man in the street," but also by leading orthodox organists is: "What is the Unit System?"

The organ differs from the piano in that, whereas the pitch of each note on the piano keyboard is fixed and cannot be varied, a note on an organ keyboard can be made to play at its normal pitch the same as if it were a note on the piano or, by drawing other stops, can be made to produce a sound an octave lower or an octave, or even two octaves, higher. This is the reason why every stop is labelled "16ft.," or "8ft.," or "4ft."

This method of labelling stops is simply the conventional way of distinguishing what pitch will be produced by the pipes controlled by that stop. The bottom pipe (C) of the diapason stop

on the keyboard is 8ft. in length and this row of pipes speaks at the same pitch as the notes on the piano. So, when a stop is labelled 8ft., it means that the pitch will be that of the key struck. A 16ft. stop will sound an octave lower and a 4ft. stop an octave higher.

Before I can explain the use of 4 ft. and 2 ft. stops, it is necessary to talk a little about harmonics. Helmholtz it was who evolved the law which states that "quality of tone depends entirely on the number and strength of the harmonics present with the fundamental." Probably the simplest way of explaining what harmonics are is to make use of the monochord by way of demonstration. This is a kind of one stringed violin used by scientists for experimental purposes, which consists of a single string (passed over two bridges 36 in. apart), which can be plucked or bowed like a violin string. Higher notes are produced from the string by temporarily shortening it, i.e. by pressing the string against the finger board; temporarily cutting off part of it; then, if the part remaining free is bowed, it gives a higher note.

Now, if, instead of *pressing* the string against the finger board and thereby preventing part of it from sounding, the string is lightly touched with the finger at the half-way point and then bowed in the normal way it will sound a note an octave above the fundamental but, although only one half of the string is being bowed, *both segments of the string will vibrate*. The note thus produced is the first harmonic of the string. Similarly, if the string is lightly touched at one-third of its length and is then bowed, it will vibrate in three distinct sections, giving the second harmonic. The point at which the finger touches the string is called a "node," i.e. a point of no movement. When the string is made to vibrate in three segments, there will be two nodes, one where the finger is touching the string at one-third of its length and the other, *although the string is not being touched there*, at two-thirds of its length. The existence of the second node can be proved by making a small paper rider and placing it on the string at the position of the second node, and it will remain there even when the string is bowed. If it is placed anywhere else on the string, it will jump off. When the string is made to vibrate in three segments in this manner, it produces the second harmonic, giving a note (G) a perfect fifth above the first harmonic. The string can, of course, be made to vibrate similarly in 4, 5, or 6, or any number of segments.

The point of all this explanation is that, when a string is bowed

as a whole without being touched at all, giving its fundamental note, many of these harmonic segments are also present in the string at the same time, although the ear hears the fundamental note so much more loudly than the harmonics that it cannot separately distinguish the latter, and the equality of tone produced from the string is entirely dependent on the number and strength of these harmonics.

Now, in the case of an organ pipe, the pipe is fixed upstairs inside the organ and can only be made louder or softer by the use of swell pedals, but its quality of tone cannot be altered by anything the organist does at the keyboard. All he can do is to sound other pipes with it; other ranks of pipes, therefore, are provided at the same pitch as the harmonics of the fundamental pipes, i.e. the octave, the 12th, the 15th, etc. These are labelled respectively 4 ft., 2 2/3 ft., 2 ft., and so on, and are known as "mutation" stops.

Now, in the orthodox organ, entirely separate ranks of pipes have to be specially provided at the pitch of these harmonics, and, even in quite large organs, their number will be very limited owing to expense. In the "unit" system, these mutation stops are "borrowed" from the original 8 ft. ranks, giving far greater variety of these stops for comparatively little extra cost. Almost all the ranks are made available at the 4 ft. pitch, the higher mutation stops being mainly derived from the flute rank of pipes.

The first thing that the orthodox organist suggests is that the effect of an organ built on this principle must necessarily be all top and bottom and very thin in the middle; owing to clever voicing, however, this is not the case, as from the middle register upwards the ranks of pipes are very slightly softened in a carefully balanced gradation as they get higher.

The advantages of this system are best demonstrated by comparing a large church organ with a small cinema organ. The Harrison three-manual, which I played as a church organist, contained 28 speaking stops of which four were 4ft. stops. The New Gallery organ contains only eight rows of pipes altogether and yet has seven 4 ft. stops. The result is that, whereas on the church organ I came to the end of every possible combination of stops in less than a month, in the eight-rank cinema organ, built on the unit system, the number of combinations of stops possible is practically infinite; after several years as a cinema organist, I could hardly ever sit down to play without discovering some new and delightful combination of tone colours.

For example, quite a simple one I chanced to find only the other day was that it is possible to play a flute rank with its own twelfth and produce a really beautiful effect. Used as an accompanying combination the effect is most quaint and delightful.

By way of further demonstration of the possibilities of the unit system, let me quote a few simple examples of the use of stops of different pitches in combination. Take an eight-rank organ with the following tone colours: tuba horn, diapason, tibia clausa, violin, violin celeste, flute, clarinet, vox humana; all these, with the exception of the clarinet, are available at 8 ft. and 4 ft. pitch.

Start with the 8 ft. tibia as a fundamental: this can be combined with a 4 ft. tuba horn, 4 ft. diapason, 4ft. tibia, 4 ft. violin, 4 ft. flute, or 4 ft. vox, in turn giving six different combinations, each with its own quite distinctive tonal result.

Now take the 8ft. tuba as a fundamental: this can be combined with each of the above 4 ft. stops in a similar way. We have, however, only considered these stops two at a time. When one remembers that they can be used two or three or four, or any number at a time, not only in the 4 ft. and 8 ft. pitch, but many of them in the 16,  $2\frac{2}{3}$ , 2 ft., or even tierce pitches, one begins to realize the innumerable possible combinations from eight ranks of pipes arranged on the unit system. Just one more example: compare the tonal result of tuba 8 ft. and tibia 4 ft. with that of tibia 8 ft. and tuba 4 ft. These two combinations sound entirely different and yet are both produced from the same two ranks of pipes.

**Transference of Stops.** In the orthodox organ the stops controlled from each manual can only be drawn on their own particular manual; e.g. the stops belonging to the swell organ can only be drawn on that keyboard. It is difficult to say who first thought of the idea of transference of stops, but Hope-Jones was the first person who really grasped its possibilities. His scheme of treating the organ as a single unit and rendering it possible to draw any of the stops on any keyboard at any reasonable pitch was explained in a lecture he gave to the members of the Royal College of Organists in 1891. His original conception of the unit system was to make it consist of a single instrument divided, into five tonal families, each family being placed in its own independent swell box.

The five families are:  
"foundation" (diapasons, tibias, etc.); "woodwind" (including



flutes, oboes, clarinets, etc.); "strings" (comprising all the imitation string stops); "brass" (trumpets, tubas, tuba-horn); "percussion" (drums, cymbals, glockenspiel, etc.). His idea was to arrange the organ so that on each of the keyboards any of the stops from the foundation group, the woodwind group, the string group, the brass group, or the percussion group, could be drawn at 16 ft., 8 ft., 4 ft., and, in some instances, at  $2\frac{2}{3}$  ft., 2 ft., and  $1\frac{3}{5}$  ft. pitches. Arranged in this way the organ would be an entirely different instrument. It would be extremely flexible, for not only could the tones be altered by using the various stops at different pitches, but the groups could be altered in power, independently of each other. At one moment the foundation tone might entirely dominate, and then, by moving the swell pedals, the strings could be made to come to the front while the foundation tone disappeared; then again the woodwind could be made to assert itself whilst the string tone was decreased, or the opening of the swell box containing the brass would allow that element to dominate. The variety of tonal combinations is obviously practically infinite.

In practice, the scheme had to be considerably modified owing to the duplication of the swell boxes and stop-keys, which made the organ unwieldy and impossible to handle. The modern Wurlitzer organ, which is the result of the modification of this idea, is now confined to two swell boxes, one of which contains most of the stops primarily used for playing solos and the other most of the stops usually used for accompaniment work. It was found impracticable for the organist to control more than two swell pedals effectively.

The greatest advantage of the unit system is that it saves needless duplication of stops and pipes. Instead of having to include half a dozen open diapasons of different degrees of loudness, one really big diapason or two diapasons of different qualities are installed, and the really efficient swell boxes enable just as great a variety of effects to be obtained.

One of the most successful examples of the orchestral type of playing I ever succeeded in producing was my gramophone record of the *Ballet Egyptien* (Luigini), made on the New Gallery organ. When it first appeared, it was frequently mistaken, even by orchestral musicians, for the playing of an orchestra. In view of the fact that this organ has only eight ranks of pipes, arranged on the unit system, this is obviously striking testimony to the value of the system.

## **Christie report for July 2020.**

Work done since last report includes:

### **Accompaniment chamber:**

Further issues with Clarinet chest action being investigated.  
Harp hammer facings have been changed from felt to leather to improve sound.

### **Solo chamber:**

Orch Oboe tremulant moved close to chest as suggested by John Parker. The rank was tuned and we fixed some non-working notes and ciphers.

Telephone Bell and Klaxon installed and wired.

Manufactured and fitted auxiliary power supply for Telephone Bell and Klaxon.

### **Console:**

Left and right drawers re-fitted, and wired to console input/output boards.

Uniflex definition file for drawer button assignments in process of refinement.

### **Piano:**

Piano has had initial tuning. To be re-tuned at about 3-month intervals until stable.

Action chests have been trial-fitted. Yet to be wired and tubed.

Magnets tested for continuity; a couple need repair.

Vacuum pump rebuilt by John Parker; manufacture of mounting frame and supply of motor being arranged.

### **General:**

The remote blower controls have now been connected.

Rebuilding of more tremulants is under way.

*John Weismantel*

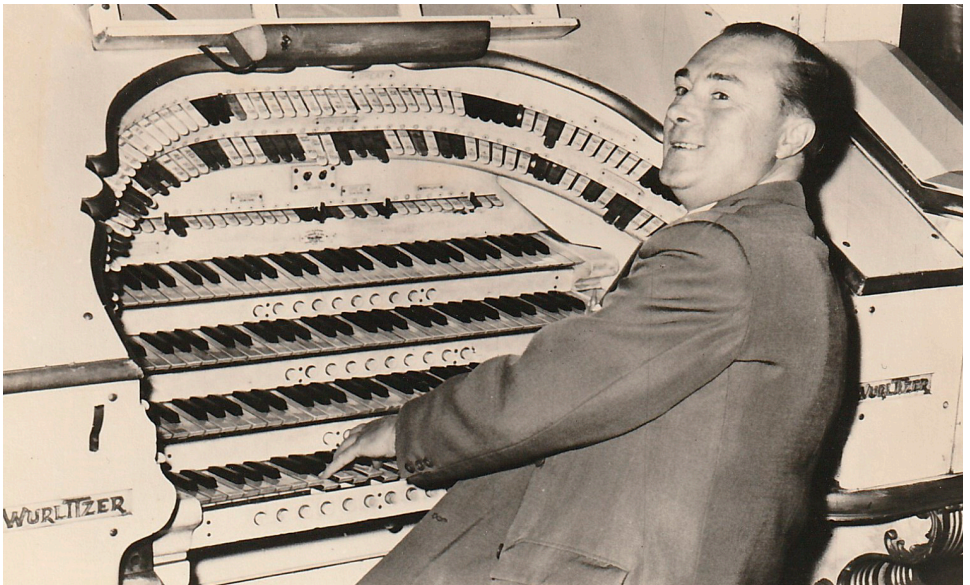
*Vice President and Project Leader*

## Members Diary

**Membership Renewals:** Thank you to all members who have renewed their TOSA Membership at the reduced rate for 2020/21. TOSA encourage those members who have not yet renewed to please renew membership. All existing members will be able to renew their membership for 2020-2021 with a 50% discount applied. There are links to various theatre organ performances on the TOSA Web Site. David Badman, forwarded your renewal notice by email or post with the May TOSA News. If you can't find your renewal form please phone David or Margaret on (02) 4776 2192 with your membership number and they will complete the renewal form for you.

*When renewing please ensure your contact details are up to date, particularly your phone number and email address. **Even if you don't receive TOSA News by email it is very important TOSA can contact you, in case of cancellation or change of date of a Concert and any other important event.***

### Mystery Organist July/August 2020



**Thanks to those members who responded naming the June Mystery Organist. Look forward to you naming this organist**

# TOSA NEWS

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