

# TOSA NEWS

October 2009  
Volume 48 No.09

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**Marrickville Town Hall, 25th October**



***David Bailey &  
Erika Boorman***

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# From the President



It has been encouraging to see the numbers attending the concerts in July and August featuring our overseas artists. The evening following Brett Valliant's concert I received an email from one of our members and I quote, in part,

"Brett Valliant was absolutely brilliant at Campsie this afternoon. There were many things to like about his performance! One that caught my attention was how he made really intelligent use of the Wurlitzer piano by featuring it as a voice making its own important contribution to the total sound. There were numerous times when he had piano in second touch on the accompaniment manual and I could see that the counter melody was coming through on the piano but the other notes put down by his left hand were not – excellent skill in his touch!"

Your Committee's aim is to always present quality artists on quality instruments but we need your regular support, whether the artist is a local or from overseas. Thank you all who make the effort to get to as many concerts as possible.

Don't forget the AGM coming up next month. This year Ritchie Willis has kindly invited us to use the Selwyn Theatre as mentioned elsewhere. The Thomas organ will be open at the conclusion of formalities and I'm sure will get a good workout. Now there's an incentive to attend the meeting! Every effort will be made to keep the formalities short while ensuring all legal requirements are met. I look forward to seeing some new faces this year – make a note of the date in your diary.

Happy organizing

Geoff Brimley

# Editorial



This month we have a return visit of David Bailey at the Marrickville Wurlitzer and his sister Erika Boorman. Please tell your family and friends, their children and your nieces and nephews about this show and encourage them to be at Marrickville Town Hall on the 25th of October. David has his own style of arrangements that are very refreshing and together with Erica will put on a great show.

If you have friends who enjoy music of the keyboard variety and particularly if you have children, nieces and/or nephews who have never heard the Mighty Wurlitzer please encourage them to come along using the Free Ticket offer in this issue.

This issue includes the continuation of the article on the Liberty Theatre Seattle organ that will be featured at the ATOS Annual Convention in Seattle 2010.

I have included in this issue an article on the organ builder Ronald Sharp, who was responsible for the design and construction of the Sydney Opera House Organ. Ronald turned 80 in August. My thanks to the OMSS who printed the article in the Spring edition of their Journal.

Please mark your calendars for the Home Organ Party at Peter Robinson's in October to play the Allen T321 Q which was revoiced by Mark Herman and Jim Clinch.

Deadline for TOSA News is the 12th of the previous month.

Enjoy the music,  
Ernie Vale, Editor  
PO Box A2322  
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# From the Mailbox...



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

Where space permits we will do our best to publish your comments, but as space is limited, the editor reserves the right to edit 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

## **The Answer to the quiz in the September TOSA News Is it a Wurlitzer Juke Box?**

Long time member Mal Mackay advises that - yes it is a 1946 model 1015 Wurlitzer Juke Box of which 56,000 were constructed and also the most popular.

*Many thanks Mal - Editor*

## **New Members**

TOSA (NSW) welcomes these new members and wish them a long and happy stay:

Wendy Cornish	Oatley
Edwin Coyle	Belrose
Scott Gant	Potts Point

# **Countdown to TOSA (NSW) AGM**

The date for the AGM is Sunday  
15th November 2009  
at The Selwyn Theatre  
13 Rosemont Ave, Mortdale 2:00pm

Notice of any Motions or Special Resolutions for the AGM should be sent to:

**The Secretary TOSA NSW Div,  
230 Spring Hill Road  
Mittagong, NSW 2575**

and must reach the Secretary no later than 11th October 2009 to enable them to be advised to members in the November issue of TOSA News.

## **Membership Card**

If you have paid your membership for the year and have not yet received your membership card please phone the Membership Secretary, Robert Alleway on 9524 7203

## **Free**

Vinyl Records (33's, not singles) of pipe organ and electronic organ music.

Artists include: Tony Fenelon, Ian Davies, George Wright, Reginald Dixon, Reginald Porter-Brown & others.

Records are located in Hurstville.  
Ph. Sue on (02) 9570 2006 .

## To watch out for..

**Sunday October 11 Home Organ Party 2.00pm** Peter Robinson's Allen T321 Q (Renaissance Quantum)

**Sunday October 25 David Bailey & Erika Boorman 2.00 pm** Marrickville Town Hall

**Sunday 15 November Annual General Meeting 2.00pm** 13 Rosemont Avenue MORTDALE

**Sunday December 13 Tony Fenelon 2.00 pm** Orion Centre Theatre, Campsie

## But wait, there's more!!

**A.T.O.S. Convention, 2010 will be in Seattle, Washington.  
Overture June 28  
Main Events June 29 - July 3  
Encore July 4**

- 7 music filled days including concerts on 14 organs by world - class performers and local stars
- Several historically significant instruments and venues
- Based in Seattle with day-trips to the north, south, and east
- Luxury hotel accommodations at an incredible bargain price
- Plenty of exciting Puget Sound sightseeing opportunities

Now would be a good time for T.O.S.A. members to start saving and planning to attend. From the organ point of view there are quite a few original installations as well as some excellent latter day ones. See the articles on Seattle Organs in each issue of TOSA News from now until June 2010.

## Advertising Rates in TOSA News

For Members:

Small, Organ related ads = FREE!

For all other cases:

Small bubble = \$11.00

Quarter Page = \$24.75

Half Page = \$49.50

Full Page = \$99.00

Full Page Insert = \$125.00

## Members' Playing Events 2009 Dates

### The Orion Campsie

#### 2nd Thursday 1:30pm

July	9
August	13
September	10
October	8
November	12
December	10

To be sure there is no last minute cancellation at the Orion please ring Walter on 9716 0151

### Marrickville Town Hall

#### 4th Monday evening at 7:30pm

July	27
August	24
September	28
October	26
November	23

To be sure there is no last minute cancellation at Marrickville please ring Neil on 9798 6742 after 7:00pm

# From Rod Blackmore's Australasian Theatre Organs

**Savoy Theatre, Hurstville,** WurliTzer Theatre Organ,  
Opus No. 1868 Style H  
2 manuals, 10 ranks ( now 2 manuals 12 ranks )  
at Howard Terrill's residence, Heathcote, Victoria

Opus 1868 is a twin of the Arcadia WurliTzer (opus 1167) with an identical specification. (Another organ of identical style is opus 1485 originally in the DeLuxe, formerly Embassy, theatre, Wellington, New Zealand. This appears to have been a popular factory model of WurliTzer.) On 11 August 1928 the renovated 1916-vintage **Kings Cross theatre**, Darlinghurst (an inner-city precinct of Sydney) at the triangular corner of Darlinghurst Road and Victoria Street, reopened featuring WurliTzer opus 1868. The organ chambers were on either side and forward of the proscenium, speaking directly into the theatre. The console was at the left hand end of the orchestra pit. The opening organist was **Joseph Wayne** from the US. After the cessation of silent films in 1931 the organ remained in use until 1935 and then fell silent.

**Suburban Cinemas Pty Ltd** decided to purchase the organ. Reinstalled by organbuilders **Hill Norman & Beard** in the new **Savoy Theatre, Hurstville** (a southern suburb of Sydney), it was opened by theatre organist **Knight Barnett** on 4th August 1937. In this location the console was installed on a hoist that rose in a spiral manner, the console pit being surrounded by a capping of curved flashed opal glass, giving illumination to the console and organist. The organ chambers were again well situated to either side of the stage, and the organ possessed an upright piano. Other organists who performed at the Savoy included **Paul Cullen (1938), Barrie Brettner (1940), Norman Robbins (1942), and Ray Chaffer, Jean Penhall, Harry Weldon, Bert Meyers** (all on 6 months rotation between 1941 and 1946) The theatre came under control of **Hoyts Theatres** in 1944, and had a facelift in 1947. **Penn Hughes** was the last to do 6 months rotation prior to June 1947, **Knight Barnett** was then resident organist until 1950, and the last theatre organist was **Owen Holland**. The organ was sold to **Penn Hughes** in July 1958 who brokered a sale to the **Congregational (now Uniting) Church, Burwood** (a western suburb.) It was commissioned there on 9th November 1958 with Hughes as the organist. At Burwood the organ was installed in chambers at the front and rear of the church, with the upright piano being against the left hand wall. During Hughes' time a number of the percussions were removed, and the Kinura exchanged for a Morton Melodia. At a later time the Vox Humana was exchanged for a Christie Vox, the Oboe for a String 15th, and various other changes occurred. The piano was sold to Alan Tranter.

In 1992 the organ was bought by **Steve McDonald** then intended by him as a residence organ at Banksmeadow. Steve set about restoring the specification and extending it to 12 ranks, providing as replacements: WurliTzer Vox, Kimball Kinura, Dennison Oboe, and missing traps and percussions. He added a Trumpet (surplus from Capri organ, South Australia), and a second (Hill Norman & Beard) Vox originally from St. Stephens church, Sydney. The 12 rank specification became: Solo: Vox, Orchestral Oboe, Tibia Clausa, Tuba Horn, Kinura, Trumpet; Main: Concert Flute, Violin, Diaphonic Diapason, Violin Celeste, Clarinet and Vox #2. In 2003, having moved house, Steve found himself unable to complete installation and sold the reconditioned organ to **Howard Terrill** of Heathcote in countryside Victoria, installation being completed in 2004.

[The Savoy continued under Hoyts' banner until 4th November 1972. On 23rd March 1975 it reopened as the **Mecca Savoy**, at times using an Allen electronic organ on the original hoist, it closed on 28th April 1990 and was finally demolished in 1995. The Kings Cross theatre continued as a cinema until 30 April 1963, and was demolished in 1966 and replaced by a hotel.]

## FOR SALE

Technics U60 Organ with  
2 manuals plus pedals & stool  
Recently serviced and in good  
playing condition  
Cabinet in excellent condition  
\$1,500 negotiable  
Phone Stella Scarvelli  
(02) 9534 1994  
Lugarno NSW

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## FOR SALE

Yamaha AR100 Spinet Organ with  
the sounds of the Theatre Pipe  
Organ ( and lots more) \$5000.00

Technics FA 1 Console \$8000.00  
or near offer  
Phone Jim on (02) 9453 0175.  
Belrose

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## Vale Stan Higgott

The past president of TOSA (WA Div. Inc.) Stan Higgott passed away on 5th August after an exhausting battle with cancer. A moving memorial service was held on Wednesday 12th August with some 200 people in attendance. Stan chose the music for the service beginning with one of his favourites *Love Changes Everything*. During the service was the song to the words of St. Francis of Assisi *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* and his wry humour came to the fore in the last piece of music, the *Radetsky March*.

TOSA NSW Divn send our condolences to Judy Wood and to Stan's children Beth, Raymond and Linda and their families.



## David Bailey will play Music from the 20s & 30s

All I Do is Dream of You  
Singing in the Rain  
You Were Meant For Me  
You are My Lucky Star & more



## Erica Boorman will sing Sophie Tucker songs including:

There'll be some changes made  
Man I Love  
April in Paris  
Life begins at Forty

# Home Organ Party

Peter Robinson's Place  
13 Harley Crescent, Eastwood

**Note Now Sunday 11** October 2009, 2:00pm

Please book by phoning Peter on 9804 0916

Allen T321 Q (Renaissance Quantum) Organ



The organ has just been revoiced by Mark Herman & Jim Clinch and sounds great in Peter's music room.

Bring your music and have a play

Please also bring a plate for afternoon tea.

**Please Note** the date is **Sunday 11** October 2009 at 2:00pm

## Fund Raiser – Wurlitzer Tapestry

Long time member Mal Mackay has donated to TOSA NSW Division a framed Tapestry of a Wurlitzer Console, made by his late wife Pat, to raise money for the Christie restoration fund.

The console is white on a maroon background and is nicely framed. A colour photo of the tapestry can be seen on the TOSA NSW web site, [www.tosa.net.au](http://www.tosa.net.au).

The silent auction closed on Sunday 23rd August 2009 and the successful bid was \$550 by Deirdre McMullan. Congratulations Deirdre.

The tapestry was on display at all TOSA activities and Concerts together with the amount of the current highest bid until 23rd August.



## Concert & Membership Prices

The following TOSA concert ticket prices now apply:

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

Child under 15yrs accompanying an adult: FREE!

Annual Membership Fees are now:

\$30.00 for Full membership, and

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

Membership enquiries Walter Pearce 9716 0151 [membership@tosa.net.au](mailto:membership@tosa.net.au)

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

## **The Latest information on the Seattle Convention 2010**

*from Rob Gliddon*

We have been giving our T.O.S.A. members some encouragement to consider attending the next American Theatre Organ Society Convention to be held in Seattle, Washington for about six days at the end of June and the beginning of July 2010. The Convention Chairman, Tom Blackwell has recently released a list of the confirmed venues and artists.

We're happy to give you this information with the promise of further updates and later on a chance to view a promotional video which was shown at the last A.T.O.S. Convention and is currently being updated to include the roster of artists who've been engaged to play for the Conventioneers.

First Nazarene Church, Spokane houses one of the most important Wurlitzers ever to leave their plant. This instrument is of 3-manuals and will be enlarged to 25 ranks and was originally installed in the Liberty Theatre, Seattle. [See article on this Theatre & Wurlitzer in Sept. TOSA News & continued in this edn.(Editor)] It was acknowledged by Mr. Farny Wurlitzer as being the organ which initially made them famous and turned the corner when they were having extreme difficulty in making their organs economically viable. This instrument was so successful Wurlitzer used to send theatre executives to Seattle by train from all over the U.S.A. to hear it.

The Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center houses a 2-manual 9-rank organ from a local theatre and this will be heard on the same day as the Spokane organ as both these towns are on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountain Range. Wenatchee is a rural town famous for the production of cherries, peaches, apricots and apples.

Seattle Paramount Theatre houses an original 4-manual 20-rank Publix I Wurlitzer which we'll hear on several occasions. The theatre has been restored as has the organ and a post horn has been added to this instrument. It has a truly grand sound which only a large theatre gives to a large organ.

The town of Everett is mostly famous for the large Boeing Aircraft Plant and whilst some of you will want to do this as a side trip the organ we'll hear in Everett is a Wurlitzer Kimball of 3-manuals and 17-ranks. This organ is a comparatively recent installation in chambers which originally housed a 2-manual 9-rank Kimball organ.

Mount Vernon and Bellingham are towns in northern Washington not too far from the Canadian Border. The Lincoln Theatre, Mt. Vernon houses an original 2-manual 7-rank Wurlitzer which still operates without any modifications. The organ was a special order and has both a Marimba and a Piano unenclosed either side of the stage. Most peculiarly it has a set of chimes which are displayed individually around the walls of the theatre. Mt. Vernon

as a town is almost like something out of the wild west or at least a time warp of the 1940s or 50s except for the modern cars parked in the main street! Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theatre is a lovely restored Spanish style theatre housing a 2-manual 12-rank Wurlitzer not unlike the Marrickville organ. Two ranks have been added to the original Style 215, a post horn and flute celeste.

A day trip to Portland, Oregon is scheduled and we'll be hearing the large 4-manual Wurlitzer in the Oaks Park Skating Rink. Jonas Nordwall will present a spectacular programme on the 4-manual 100+ rank organ in First Methodist Church Portland and if you're thinking it will be all classics you'll be wrong as this organ contains a "gospel division" (read theatre division).

Cleveland High School Assembly Hall contains a large 3-manual Kimball which is currently having some major work done on it in preparation for next year's Convention.

The hall of St. Columban Church, Yelm, houses a fine 3-manual 16-rank Robert Morton organ. Fortunately the Parish Priest, Father Terrence is a theatre organ fan and the congregation at this church are very welcoming.

Tacoma is a city 30 miles south of Seattle and the Temple Theatre there houses a very, very rare original 2-manual 9-rank Kimball organ. If you thought only Wurlitzer could produce good theatre organs

be prepared to change your mind after hearing Kimballs and a Robert Morton.

Calvary Christian Assembly, Seattle has a 3-manual Wurlitzer/Kimball which has an echo division at the rear of the sanctuary while the main division is at the front.

Tahoma Studio is on the property of Gerry Gould, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain and his wife Mary. The organ is in a separate very large building at the rear of the property and will give Conventioneers the chance to hear another large Wurlitzer.

The largest theatre organ on the programme is located in Wurlitzer Manor, Gig Harbour. Of 4-manuals and 48-ranks it speaks into a living room which has on occasion held in excess of 300 people. The owners Raymond and Barbara Lavine have been most generous in allowing many programmes in what is in effect their lounge room. Their beautiful home has panoramic views of the Tacoma Narrows area of Puget Sound.

If the list of instruments has you enthused here are the names of the artists engaged to play - Nathan Avakian (2009 Scholarship Winner); John Atwell and Tony Fenelon; Scott Foppiano; Simon Gledhill; Richard Hills; Jonas Nordwall; Donna Parker; Jim Riggs; Walt Strony; Dave Wickerham and Lew Williams, Jelani Eddington, and at the Oaks Park Wurlitzer will be house organists Dean Lemire and Keith Fortune..

**TOSA NSW Division Presents**  
a performance by  
two great Australian artists  
**David Bailey at the Keyboard**  
and  
**Jazz Singer Erika Boorman**



**David playing the former Prince Edward Theatre  
Mighty Wurlitzer**

**“ Boom or Bust”**  
**Music from the 20s & 30s**

**Marrickville Town Hall,  
Marrickville Road, Marrickville**

**Sunday 25 October 2009 at 2:00pm**  
*(Disabled Access available via ramp beside Fire Station)*

**Free parking near the Town Hall**

**Bookings: (02) 9629 2257**

Visa & Mastercard accepted

## David Bailey

Since discovering the cinema organ in 2001, David has become increasingly interested in the rare and vast tonal and dynamic abilities of this most interesting instrument.

Through performing for many organ societies in Brisbane and interstate, David has acquired invaluable knowledge on every aspect of the cinema organ. He is now keen to venture down new musical avenues and bring the seldom heard voice of the cinema organ to a new audience.

Cinema organs are rare across the globe and until recently Brisbane possessed only one. With the installation of the Wurlitzer style 260 (formerly of Brisbane's Regent theatre) in the Australian Cinematheque in Brisbane, a new opportunity to experience films from the silent era has arrived. David is now kept busy composing and performing scores to augment films from the first age of cinema.

## Erika Boorman - Vocals

Erika Boorman started out singing at an early age and with only a limited amount of formal training she began performing in various semi-professional musicals. After experimenting with contemporary music, writing and performing originals, Erika was lured back to her lifelong passion – Jazz. She moved on to working with a guitarist and then in two trios, the most recent being "The Swinging Cats". Now, after having her three children Erika is once again on an endeavour to reacquaint herself with Jazz, the genre she loves the most.

**The movie "Singing in the Rain"** included amongst others the following numbers:

All I Do is Dream of You  
Singing in the Rain  
You Were Meant For Me  
You are My Lucky Star

**Sophie Tucker songs included the following:**

There'll be some changes made  
Man I Love  
April in Paris  
Life begins at Forty

**Tickets: Members \$20; Non Member Pensioner \$22  
Non-Members \$25; Student (15 – 21 Years) \$10**

**If it is your or a friends first visit to a TOSA Concert it is Free  
for them by completing the Free Ticket Offer Form**

**Group bookings for 10 or more adults \$20 per person  
Bookings: (02) 9629 2257  
Visa & Mastercard accepted**

## **Opera House Organ Builder Ronald Sharp turned eighty in August this year**

The Organ Music Society of Sydney sent a birthday card to Ronald signed by 80 well-wishers. Mr Sharp designed and was responsible for the building of the Sydney Opera House Organ which is one of the treasures of the City of Sydney. Whilst this organ is not a theatre organ it is well worth taking in a performance to hear the wonderful voices it produces - particularly in the hands of David Drury.

The following interview appeared in The Sydney Organ Journal Vol. 40, No. 4. Spring 2009.

*Ed. Shall we start with your family background?*

RS: I was born in Kogarah Hospital . My father's family came from Aberdeen. My father, William, played drums in a highland band. I still have his drumsticks! He served as a stoker in the Merchant Navy in the First World War. In Sydney he was a baker but he died of pneumonia in 1935 when I was six. My mother, Florence Rose, was English, born at Twickenham in 1896. She came to Sydney with her family aged five. They married in 1929 at Bexley Presbyterian Church. I have a brother, Bruce who was a gymnast in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

*Ed. What about music?*

RS: After my father died my grandmother, Ada Dumbleton, came to live with us. She taught me piano. She was organist at Bexley Congregational Church which had a reed organ. In 1938 I had piano lessons from Ronald Marston who was organist at St Clement's Marrickville. He used to hit my knuckles when I made a mistake.

At Bexley Public School I joined the flute band. Then I went to Kogarah Intermedi-

ate High School where I immediately made friends with a boy who played Chopin. I thought this was wonderful so I started to teach myself to play Chopin. I had some lessons with Leonard Bell who lived nearby. I also had one term of organ lessons from Jean McVey at Hurstville Methodist. During the first lesson the blower blind valve cord got stuck causing full blower pressure. I said I'd look inside and see if I could fix the problem. I knew nothing about it but I jiggled the cord and it released, bringing the pressure back to normal. Pure luck, but Jean thought I was very clever. I also had a term with Allman at St James'. At the lessons he was calm and helpful but firm. I am not a good student as I question everything, but my lessons were for my understanding more than future performance.

*Ed. What further training did you have?*

RS: None. I had the Intermediate Certificate and pre- apprenticeships in electrics and mechanics. That's all. I made model aeroplanes. I found I could make things and fix things. I designed a glider and built it over two years finishing in 1956. It was very successful. Once I stayed up, riding the thermal currents for two hours. The people who bought it from me crashed it into a tree at the end of their first flight. Huh! I worked as a fruit packer for Neil Cottee who was keen on flying. So I joined the Royal Aero Club at Mascot and learned to fly starting in 1948. I had a private pilot's licence for 50 years. I've owned four aeroplanes - a Bonanza, two Piel Emeralds and a Mooney. Once I took Norman Johnston up for a flight in an Auster. He was in the Air Force, you know, and when we came in to land he watched the altimeter and automatically started counting down the feet: "six hundred, five hundred..." His old flying training came back!

*Ed. So how did you get into organ building?*

RS: At the end of the 'fifties I started to make an organ. It had a two manual console and a row of pipes. I made the metal pipes on the kitchen table. I knew Ray Myers who lived nearby. He was in the choir at St Mary's Cathedral. One time I went along to an Organ Society ramble and I remember Keith Johns playing the Jackson during open console. It was my first experience with a cathedral acoustic and I was very impressed.

I had previously attended concerts and recitals at the Town Hall. I heard Giesecking, Solomon, Menhuin, Perleman, Bredel etc. I was taken to hear Dupre in 1939 but when we got there a sign said 'House Full', so we just went home. Thirty five years later I met Dupre at St Sulpice. The school concerts conducted by Sir Bernard Heinz were very good, too. I was always interested in music. All music, not just organ music. I want organists to be musicians, not just organists.

Anyway, I told Ray Myers that I would make an organ for St Mary's Cathedral and Father Harden agreed. The first stage would be two manuals and pedals, no reeds. There was no contract, just a bit of paper. I was to be paid three thousand pounds. But out of that I had to buy the Jackson for five hundred so I made nothing out of it because the remaining 2,500 pounds only bought the parts. The Jackson was stored in the crypt. Neville Stevenson wanted it for St Paul's College but it wouldn't fit. It was broken up because no-one wanted it. Graeme Rawson bought some pipes. The Great Bourdon went to the new Cathedral Pedal. The Swell Bourdan went to No 2 organ at Bexley North Pedal as I remember. **I also bought the three-manual fifteen rank Wurlitzer from the Regent Theatre** (Sydney Ed). Now it's in a private house at Hurstville.

*Ed. How were you influenced by the Organ Reform Movement?*

RS: Oh I was a member of the Organ Institute and met Howard Pollard but that was

largely on account of Vincent Shepperd. He asked me to make him a baroque organ but then Flentrop sold him the Dutch chamber organ. So I made Norman Johnston's practice organ using Vincent's old pipes.

*Ed. What do you owe to Norman Johnston?*

RS: Norman was very supportive. He was impressed with my early efforts at St Mary's Cathedral and sent me to Noumea to fix the Cathedral's reeds damaged by insect spray. I was responsible for maintaining the Uni organ and Norman wanted it to be in top form for the visit of Messaien and Gillian Weir in 1988. But I can't bear Messaien and his music. I couldn't bring myself to tune the organ so Norman phoned me and said he had made "other arrangements". It was all my own fault.

*Ed. Over the years your ideas about organ building have developed but some principles must have remained constant. What would these be?*

RS: First, the pure, natural tone of every pipe. Secondly the musical line of the regulation of every rank. Thirdly, each rank is a musical instrument in its own right. Given this and a steady wind supply (no turbulence) this is the basis of the organ as a musical instrument. When the Knox organ first played with only just the Brustwerk Gedackt Warwick Mehaffey, a musician who plays the organ, played Bach's d minor *Tocatta and Fugue* right through and all those present agreed that it was musically complete. The action, tracker or electric, is a side issue. Tracker is vital in small organs. However, the Opera House organ should have a second console with electric action at the front of the stage. Top touch is incorrect because it can't be controlled after first pressure. Top touch is detrimental to the initial touch of tracker action. The best touch is an even touch as in the piano.

*Ed: What principles have changed?*

RS: How to make a wind supply. I devel-

oped a flexible wind supply system that is noiseless and free of turbulence. It supplies slightly rising pressure with demand. The wind supply must not drop with full organ as it usually does. My early organs had design faults such that as demand grew the pressure would drop. My early regulators had a bad resonance which had to be damped by friction. I learned how to cure that with the Beckerath organ. I made my new system to Meckerath's design. We stayed in each other's homes. At dinner one night he was encouraging his twelve year-old son to drink wine and I asked him if this was wise. He said his son had to learn to drink. Well, von Beckerath didn't live much longer so maybe I had a point.

*Ed. And so today....?*

RS: Everything in all organs could now be in swell boxes. A properly designed and made swell box is no different in tonal and musical quality than a classical, work-disposition case such as Schnitger's. I know them. It is how you make it. It's got to be big and shallow with a big area of shutters - like the Perth Concert Hall. The Sydney Town Hall organ is not a refined musical instrument. **It is a beautiful theatre instrument.** I like it as such.

*Ed. It is not given to many men to leave such a legacy of fine craftsmanship and beauty as ....*

RS: No. No! I've been cheated out of leaving the legacy I wanted to leave. I no longer look after any of them, which would now be giving me a bit of income. None of my organs has been finished to my satisfaction. All were made for half the price and in half the time I should have been given to make them. At the Opera House I was under almost unbearable political pressure. My most beautiful instrument at Ormond College in Melbourne was trashed without my consent and rebuilt by another organ builder and many parts sold off for money.

I was the first in an ignorant town wanting to show something new and greater. The only way I could do this was by giving half the organ because my price was twice what people would pay. I wanted to show the Organ Society what was possible. I never got true acknowledgement for what I had done. Do you know, I have never been asked to choose a player and the program for a first or any concert on my organs to show what I spent all that effort for? Organs are not loud. I remember Vincent always said, "When an organ is accompanying something you never know that it was there until it stops". Why do they always have to put on full organ for the last note. Poulenc likes to challenge and annoy us with dissonance and make jokes, but I spent my life trying to bring the organ into the family of the wider world of musical instruments.

St John's, Canberra is the perfect church organ. You can hear everything clearly even when you are underneath the gallery. Perth Concert Hall was never meant to be other than what it is. That is what they could afford. Now they want to make it louder. All instruments have a limit past which you can't louden the tone without turning tone into noise. It's no good trying. Physics is adamant. All the overseas organ builders wanted to build the Opera House organ in cooperation with me. "Call me Dirk", Flentrop told me. Gillian Weir drove me for three hours in a Mercedes Benz at a hundred miles an hour to see a Casavant. I was lying down on the back seat with my eyes closed. Terrifying! I should have allowed Rieger to work with me. I was brought up always to tell the truth. I was the naive, good boy. You know the type. Well, there's still time, still a chance. I have the windchests from Ormand. It could be reconstructed. Now if some church wants a thirty stop organ and they've got a million dollars, or half a million.

# The Liberty Theatre Seattle

*From the Puget Sound Pipeline March 1999*

*Continued from the article on the Liberty Theatre Wurlitzer in the September issue of TOSA News.*

## The Liberty Wurlitzer Had a Built in Curfew Controller

As a teenager in Seattle, Dick Simonton met Johnny Von Herberg, son of one of the owners of the Liberty Theatre. The two had full run of the theatre and its Wurlitzer before the house opened and after it closed at night. The two boys couldn't stay and noodle on the three manual instrument too long after the last show at night - because the organ had an exclusive built-in curfew control. The 'automatic' controller worked in this way: when the blower was installed, the most economical way to power it was with a 500 volt direct current motor. The source of the power was from the overhead trolley wire of the local streetcar line. Electricity flowed freely all day while the streetcars moved about the city, but, recalls Simonton, he and Johnny Von Herberg had to be out of the theatre and on their way home on the last car passing the front of the house at night, for after going to the end of the line and discharging the passengers, the motorman and conductor ran the streetcar back to the carbarn. When the last car was in, the main generator switch was pulled and all power ceased until the next morning when it was time to start running again. Because it was a long walk home, in the dark, with possible parental anger to encounter as well, the two boys did not fail to meet the curfew restriction.

Opened in 1914, the Liberty Wurlitzer was a 3 manual 17 rank organ and was installed over the proscenium. Owners of this theatre

also operated the Portland Liberty with its big 4 manual Wurlitzer. This organ was later owned by the Granada Organ Loft Club in Seattle and was installed in the old Granada Theatre, a neighbourhood house. The instrument was used for concerts and accompaniment of silent pictures. Gaylord Carter, famed L.A. ATOE member, played several *Flicker Fingers* shows there.

The Liberty closed with silent films in 1929 and reopened the following year with 'talkies' and the wonderful organ was never played publicly again. It was maintained by Simonton and Gordon Blanchard, however, until 1935. The theatre was finally razed in 1955 and the Wurlitzer taken out and installed in the gymnasium of the Pacific Lutheran University, Parkland, Washington. The organ sold for \$1,500.00.

*This organ will be featured at the ATOS Annual Convention in 2010.*

## GRAEME COSTIN'S ORGAN RECITAL

On Sunday 13.9.09 Robert Gliddon, David & myself ventured to St Stephen's Anglican Church Willoughby for a Recital given by TOSA member Graeme Costin which included his son Doug on an electric guitar.

The first half of "Musical Mayhem" included music from Star Wars, Back to the Future, Gone with the Wind, Burt Bacharach, Phantom of the Opera and Fascinating Harmony.

After intermission Graeme played several requests from the audience, followed by a Buster Keaton silent movie called "Cops" and ending with The Flower Drum Song.

The 3 manual 24 stops organ is a 1930 Hill Norman & Beard and was enlarged in 1971.

It was a delightful afternoon, something different and we were happy to give Graeme our support.

*Deirdre McMullan.*

# Marrickville Town Hall - How To Get There

Marrickville Town Hall is located on the corner of Petersham Road and Marrickville Road.

There is a disabled access ramp on the Firestation side of the building.

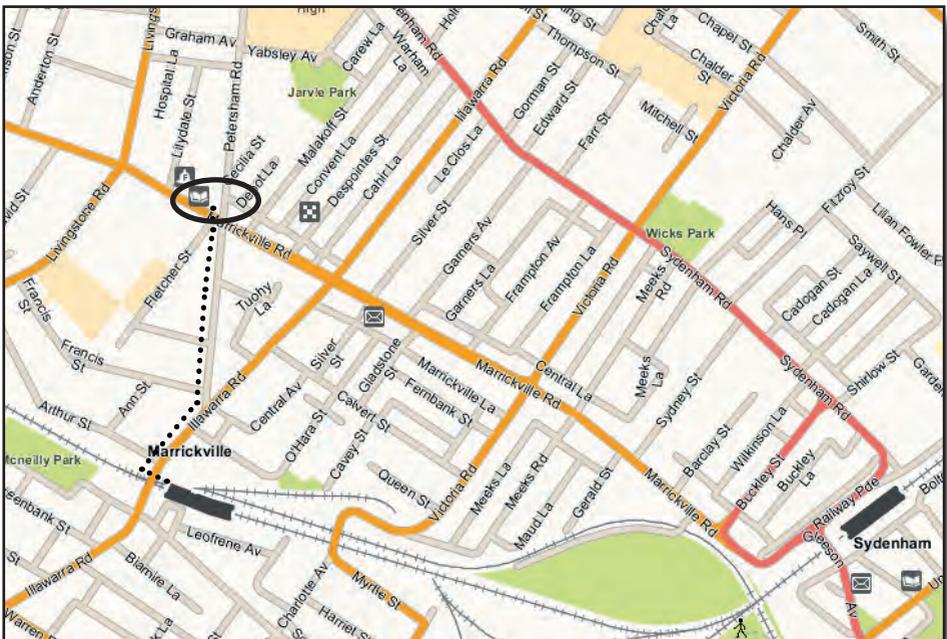
Marrickville Station (on the Bankstown line): Turn right into Illawarra Road then veer left up Petersham Road to Marrickville Road.

Alternatively, take the 426 bus from stand A Circular Quay at 1.05pm and Railway Square, Central at 1.19pm. Arrives Marrickville Road near Town Hall (Illawarra Road) 1.38pm.

The nearest council carpark to Marrickville Town Hall is accessed from Touhy Lane, off Petersham Road at the rear of St Clement's Church. It is rooftop parking and is known as Banana Joe's Parking.

*\*NOTE: TOSA has approval to park here in excess of 2 hours on concert days.*

Please refer to the map below for a detailed view, or search for Marrickville Library on [www.whereis.com](http://www.whereis.com) on the web, or [www.131500.com.au](http://www.131500.com.au) for transport details.



# **Free Ticket Offer!**

*Do you have friends who have never been to a TOSA Concert?*

## **Invitation**

*If your friends have never been to a TOSA Theatre Organ Concert before, here is your chance to invite them to experience a presentation by*

## **David Bailey & Erika Boorman**

**The time:** *2pm on Sunday 25th October*

**The place:** *Marrickville Town Hall*

*Post this form, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:*

*The TOSA Ticket Secretary,  
18 Acres Road,  
Kellyville, 2155*

*An official numbered ticket must be obtained from our Ticket Secretary by mail in advance.*

*This invitation will not be accepted to gain entry at the door.*

*I/we (one or two people only) have not been to a TOSA concert before:*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Colours of the King**

(Programme of Organ Music Society of Sydney) Prepared and presented by Andrew Grahame.

### **2MBS FM 102.5**

2nd Saturday of each month,  
5 – 6 pm

## **The Theatre Organ**

Prepared and presented by  
Andrew Grahame

### **2MBS FM 102.5**

3rd Saturday of each month,  
6.30 – 7.00 pm

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## **Details of Other Music Clubs**

### **TOSA Qld Divn -**

1st Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Mike Gillies - 3279 3930

### **Conn-Sole Music Club -**

4th Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Brian Clark 3888 6234

### **Wurlitzer Music Club -**

1st Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Brian Bull 5572 8913

### **Rhapsody Music Club -**

4th Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Barry Porter 5574 4341

### **The Tweed Links Music Club -**

1st Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Jean Stone 5590 5778

### **Queensland Accordion Club -**

2nd Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Ashley Ebsworth  
5539 5656

## **Sunshine Coast Organ Society -**

2nd Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Marie Davis 5494 7559

## **Redcliffe Keyboard & Music Club**

2nd Sunday of each month

## **Cairns Organ Society -**

3rd Sunday of each month  
Inquiries Margaret Pearson  
4055 8607

## **National Trust Visit Marrickville Town Hall**

On Sunday 20th September the National Trust After Hours Committee and members of the National Trust enjoyed afternoon tea at Marrickville Town Hall following their historical tour of Marrickville. TOSA and the National Trust jointly provided afternoon tea with the help of several TOSA Executive and Committee and members of the National Trust After Hours Committee.

TOSA thank Marrickville Council for making the Town Hall available and thank member Christopher Waterhouse for playing the Wurlitzer during afternoon tea.

Thanks also to Committee member Rob Gliddon for giving a comprehensive talk on the history of the organ and the Prince Edward Theatre. All members of the National Trust present really enjoyed hearing the Wurlitzer.

# Roland

[www.rolandcorp.com.au](http://www.rolandcorp.com.au)



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283B Victoria Rd. (cnr. Euston St.) Ph: (02) 9898 9887  
**Seven Hills**  
3/81-83 Station Rd. Ph: (02) 9838 8832

# Booking Form

Post to: The Ticket Secretary  
18 Acres Road, Kellyville, NSW, 2155

Seats cannot be reserved unless payment is received in advance. If your booking and payment are received too late for tickets to be posted, they will be held at the Box Office – but we ask your help in booking early.

**David Bailey & Erika Boorman** 2:00pm Sunday October 25  
Marrickville Town Hall, Marrickville Road, Marrickville

Phone Enquiries and Bookings: Mrs Kath Harding : (02) 9629 2257

Please send me:

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member tickets @ \$20.00                         | Total \$ _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member Pensioner Tickets @22.00              | Total \$ _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member Tickets @ \$25                        | Total \$ _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Tickets (15 – 21 yrs) @ \$10.00          | Total \$ _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group booking 10 or more tickets @\$20 ea person | Total \$ _____      |
|   | Full Total \$ _____ |

Children accompanied by a paying adult – FREE  
(but you should request a reserved seat for them)

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ My Phone No. is: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a Cheque  or Money Order

Payable to : TOSA (NSW Div.) for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Or**

Charge my Mastercard  Visa Card

No: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with payment.

Mastercard/Visa may be phoned through, in which case a small charge will be made for postage.

Please indicate your preferred seating location eg. row no. or position: \_\_\_\_\_

# Members Diary

October 2009

## **Sunday 11 at 2:00pm Home Party**

Peter Robinson's, Allen T321 Q 3 Manual  
13 Harley Crescent, Eastwood  
Open Console  
*see more details in this issue*

**Monday 12 October 10am to 12 noon Marrickville Town Hall  
Function sponsored by Marrickville Council  
featuring Cliff Bingham at the Wurlitzer**

## **\*\*Sunday 25 at 2:00pm, Marrickville Town Hall David Bailey with Erika Boorman "Boom and Bust"**

Music from the 20's & 30's including from  
Singing in the Rain and some great Sophie Tucker songs

### **Radio**

Highland FM 107.1 for "Sweet & Lovely" every Sunday at 5:30pm presented by Chris Styles.

[www.highlandfm.org.au](http://www.highlandfm.org.au) then go to the 'SOUND LOUNGE',  
click on the Mike Icon and wait for Windows Media Player to open.

Radio Northern Beaches 2MWM-FM 88.7 & 90.3 for "Theatre Organ Magic"  
the first Sunday of the month at 12 noon presented by John Batts

Radio 2MBS-FM 102.5 "Colours of the King" (program of the Organ Music Society of  
Sydney)

2nd Saturday of each month, 5pm till 6 pm

Radio 2MBS-FM 102.5 "The Theatre Organ" 3rd Saturday of each month, 6.30 – 7.00 pm

### **Web Sites of Interest:**

[www.tosa.net.au](http://www.tosa.net.au)

[www.theatreorgansaust.info](http://www.theatreorgansaust.info) (history of cinema organ installations in Australasia)

[www.sydneyorgan.com](http://www.sydneyorgan.com) (our sister society, the Organ Music Society of Sydney OMSS)

<http://www.blackheath-compton.org.uk>

[www.musicalmuseum.co.uk](http://www.musicalmuseum.co.uk)

# TOSA NEWS

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