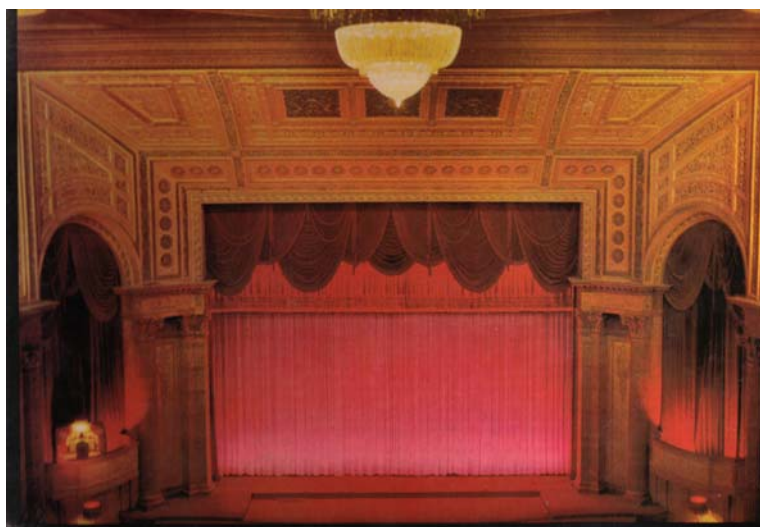


Rod Blackmore's  
**AUSTRALASIAN THEATRE ORGANS**

Victoria section



*Best known location:*

**Regent Theatre,**  
**Melbourne**

**SECOND ORGAN**

**WurliTzer theatre organ**

Composite organ from  
Opus Nos. 1902 & 359  
4 manuals, 19 ranks

*Composite parts came from 3/15 organ at  
Ambassador's theatre, Perth, Western Australia  
and 4 ranks from Paramount theatre,  
Melbourne, & rebuilt console. Organ sold in  
1969 and is now in private storage.*

**See also the stories of the *first* and *third* organs at the *Regent* theatre**

Following the tragic fire that gutted Melbourne's dream palace, the *Regent* theatre, in April 1945, the theatre was rebuilt with attention given to its restoration in the style and close resemblance to the original. It can be seen, however, that the proscenium was rebuilt in a rectangular shape instead of the previous arched style typical of the original and other *Regent* theatres.

It might have seemed unlikely, however, that another organ would be installed. The fact that this occurred is probably due to demands of the insurers. *Hoyts Theatres Ltd.* were then also the management of the *Ambassador's* theatre in Perth, Western Australia, and the 3 manuals 15 ranks *WurliTzer* organ from that theatre (opus 1902) was removed to be consolidated with 4 ranks from the small (7 ranks) *WurliTzer* organ from the *Paramount* theatre, Melbourne (opus 359). The 3 manual console was rebuilt to become a 4 manual unit.

The *Regent*, thoroughly phoenix-like, reopened on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 1947. The organist at the 4/19 *WurliTzer* was Len Davis (a last minute replacement for the intended *Lionel Corrick*.) The organ itself was contained in three pipe chambers, the console at first being located on its own hoist at the left of the orchestra stage. Later it was to be placed in the "box" on the left when a screen forward of the proscenium was put in for *CinemaScope*, and there it remained (as seen in the photograph above), even after the screen had been put back behind the proscenium – not the best position for an organist to play from in balancing the sounds across the auditorium. Other organists who performed at the *Regent* on this organ were: Horace Weber (1948-49), Geoff Robertson (1949-52), Stanfield Holliday (1952-1961). The organ was then heard only spasmodically until a young Tony Fenelon was engaged from Christmas 1964 until 12<sup>th</sup> January 1969 (when a final concert featuring *Tony Fenelon*, *Gordon Hamilton* and *Alan Tranter*) was held.

The organ was sold to organist *Alan Tranter* and placed in storage. It has not been heard of since. The *Regent* itself closed on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1970. There were plans to demolish the building - for many years it was but an empty shell - but long and vocal public protests ("Save the Regent!") finally won the day by 1993, and under the management of David Marriner theatres the theatre has successfully opened, principally as a venue for live productions from 17<sup>th</sup> August 1996.

**Go now to the story of the *third* organ at the *Regent***

The pipe ranks of the 4/19 *Regent* *WurliTzer* were:

*Solo chamber (right):* Trumpet, Tibia Clausa, Orchestral Oboe, Kinura, Saxophone, Oboe Horn, Quintadena

*Main chamber (left):* Tuba Horn, Diaphonic Diapason, Clarinet, String, Viol d'Orchestre, Viol Celeste, Flute, Vox Humana

*Orchestral chamber (left):* Open Diapason Oboe Gamba, Tibia Plena, English Horn

