

# IT'S NOT A HOTEL. IT'S THE BILTMORE.™

by Ralph Beaudry

"LA's the Place," and the Los Angeles Biltmore will be our convention headquarters. The Biltmore was selected for three reasons: its central location, its newly modernized rooms and suites and its exquisite Spanish-Italian Renaissance architecture. The Biltmore's architecture is so unique that the hotel has been declared a Historical Cultural Landmark, and when you enter the lobby, the surrounding architectural beauty will immediately captivate you.

The Biltmore opened in 1923. Earl Heitschmidt was the architect, and John B. Smeraldi (who had worked on several palaces at the Vatican) was the designer and painter of the ceilings and walls. Within the past year, the beautiful murals, gargoyles and beamed ceilings have been fully restored to their original condition.

What used to be the lobby is now the Rendezvous Court, replete with plants and trees, chairs and sofas and, at times during the day,

## CONVENTION '87 HEADQUARTERS

a string orchestra. If you should decide to have lunch or dinner in Bernard's (on the south side of the Court), you'll find yourself dining in an exact replica of a palace uncovered from the ruins of Pompeii!

Up the twin staircases from the Court is the elevator lobby with its six high-speed elevators, and just beyond is the Galeria which runs the entire width of the Biltmore. Our Registration, Hospitality and Record Shop rooms and all of our in-hotel meeting rooms

The elegant Galeria in the Los Angeles Biltmore.



are just off the Galeria. The Galeria is one of the most beautiful areas in the Biltmore with a coffered ceiling and three-dimensional sculptures as well as large surfaces covered with oil paintings set in a wheel mosaic and interspersed with bronze filigrees.

The Crystal Ballroom, which will be the scene of our banquet, has the most elaborate ceiling in the Biltmore. Mounted in its concave, domed surface is a single canvas of great proportion decorated with goddesses, cupids, satyrs and other mythical figures. Two mammoth crystal lighting fixtures, imported from Europe, are suspended from the ceiling to add a truly glittering effect.

Although these public spaces are designed after the palaces and cathedrals of Europe, the more than 700 guest rooms are newly decorated in bright colors with plants and hanging artwork (many by Jim Dine who is famous for his stylized depictions of hearts).

Yes, "LA's the Place," and the Biltmore is the perfect setting for the headquarters of our 1987 Convention. □



The Biltmore Crystal Ballroom where the Convention banquet will be held.

## Theatre Organ News From Australia



by  
*Bruce  
Ardley*



On August 17 an exciting event occurred when the 3/9 Compton was opened by Tony Fenelon at the Albert Hall in Canberra. This is the first theatre organ to have been installed in the capital city of Australia. This organ was installed in the Gaumont Palace Cinema, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, U.K. Purchased by the owners of the Dendy Cinema, Brighton, Melbourne, it was intended for installation in a new cinema, but the cinema was never built, and they sold it to the up-and-coming TOSA Society in Canberra. It was an appalling mess when purchased, and seven labourious years were spent on its restoration. The top manual is a coupler one, and the aim is to bring this to the requirements of a full "solo" manual. The instrument is controlled from a handsome white and gold console which looks stunning against the red velvet of the stage curtain.

Prior to the opening, the final regulation and voicing was carried out by organ consultant and builder George Stephens. George has a sympathetic approach to theatre organs and manages to obtain the best from them. Canberra's organ proved to be no exception.

The grand opening provided a wonderful

reward to all those who worked so hard and freely gave their time to the restoration and installation. The affair was very professionally organised, and it was obviously heartening to see the Albert Hall packed with people eager to listen. Quite a change for Australia's capital city which, for some time, has been famous mainly for its politicians spreading the gloomy message of our troubled economy. Featured artist Tony Fenelon provided the usual deft performance that we have come to expect and delighted his audience with an attractive and well-chosen programme. An attractive souvenir booklet of the Inaugural Concert, which includes a splendid colour photograph of the console, is available for the Australian equivalent of U.S. \$4.50, which includes postage. Order from: Theatre Organ Society of Australia, (A.C.T. Division) Inc., P.O. Box 367, Civic Square, A.C.T. 2608, Australia.

We move to the Western Australia TOSA Division with its headquarters in Perth. The membership there has purchased the 3/10 Compton installed at present in the Purvisonic Sound Studios. This organ was first installed in the Plaza Cinema, Worthing,

Sussex, U.K., and migrated to Australia in the 1970s. The acquisition follows the death of the former owner who was a TOSA member.

Organist Tony Fenelon travelled from his home in Melbourne to Adelaide recently to give two theatre organ concerts in two days to appreciative audiences. The first took place on the 2/12 Wurlitzer (ex-Plaza Melbourne) installed in Wyatt Hall, Adelaide. The organ was in top condition, and it gave many of the audience great pleasure to hear it again. It had received fairly low profile whilst so much interest and activity was diverted to the Capri Theatre project.

The Capri Theatre provided the second venue for Tony to play the 4/16 hybrid instrument so interestingly installed there. Tony played many of the selections he had featured on his early LP recordings — particularly those made on the 4/19 Wurlitzer when it resided in Melbourne's elegant Regent Theatre. The South Australian TOSA, proud owners of the Capri Theatre, is having the console placed on a lift — quite an expensive undertaking, but the results will justify the cost. The first public concert using the lift will be by organists Tony Fenelon and Ray Thornley in November.

South Australia will be host for the next annual National TOSA Convention in Adelaide next Easter, commencing on Friday, April 17 and concluding on Tuesday, April 21. With currency rates as they now stand between the U.S. dollar and the Australian dollar, a trip to this country around convention time could be an attractive proposition. We hope that we can welcome great numbers of you people. For information about the convention, write to:

The Convention Secretary,  
Mrs. Bernice Larritt,  
Theatre Organ Society of Australia  
G.P.O. Box 595,  
Adelaide, 5001. South Australia

In June Dennis James again toured. This time with his associate, Thom Gall. As on