

## OrganFax.co.uk Article

# The Theatre Organ Fact Finder

[www.cinema-organs.org.uk](http://www.cinema-organs.org.uk) is a huge web site and a major resource for the Cinema Organ Society. This organization is intended for those interested in organ music as entertainment, with the emphasis on the cinema or theatre pipe organ. For the subject of this article though we



thought would look at one section, the 'Theatre Organ Fact Finder'. Here you will find everything you ever needed to know about the Theatre Organ and never dared to ask, plus a lot more.

Visitors to [www.toff.org.uk](http://www.toff.org.uk) will find a useful compendium of technical knowledge about theatre organs and their workings. You will find a full A to Z about Theatre Organs, in fact we were surprised just how much information is held here. Facts, pictures, diagrams, you could spend hours looking around this site which is obviously a labour of love which must have taken quite some time to compile.

The Fact Finder is based on the British theatre organ scene; in some cases terminology may differ from that used in the USA or Australia, but the practice is usually identical. You can either browse around specific topics using the navigator symbols on the left, or use the 'Everything from A

to Z' section as a glossary. Just click on the grey folder symbols on the left to open up further links.

The Fact Finder came about from an observation by a COS member who noted that newcomers to the world of the theatre organ often came upon an almost impenetrable barrier of terminology. He suggested that a simple glossary might overcome this barrier and so work was started with the intention of creating a fairly un-ambitious document with the idea that it could be published in some form, maybe even on the web! This developed into the current comprehensive guide it is today.

The text of the Fact Finder has been put together by John Abson, one of the most respected organ technicians in Europe. He has a vast amount of knowledge on the design, construction and maintenance of the cinema organ or 'Theatre Pipe Organ' as it is sometimes known. It was back in 2002 when John first started assembling information and he continued to build up the data over the years as time permitted. In 2007 he approached the COS webmaster David Reed with a view to incorporating the details within the COS website.

The advantages of linking definitions, descriptions and photo's using a web environment quickly became apparent and in this case it leads the enquirer on a journey of discovery through the TOFF 'virtual organ chamber' and provides a wealth of information. David and John decided right at the beginning of the web project that the new 'Fact Finder' would



*(above is one of the many beautifully detailed pictures from the site)*

also contain detailed diagrams and tables as necessary to help explain all of the technical aspects of these vast instruments. A considerable amount of time was spent drawing diagrams and at various locations taking the necessary photographs to accompany the text. In 2008 John and David went on a mammoth photographic session at the East Sussex National Golf course where a new very large Wurlitzer organ was being installed. This proved to be the perfect chance to photograph individual pipes in detail and represents a large part of the photographs taken.

Since its inception much more additional work has been completed on the fact finder the site has been updated many times. Here at OrganFax we would urge you to go and have a look at what is a fascinating and hugely informative web site.

*John Romero, 2009*  
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