

April 2026

Sunday, April 19

♪ ♪ SFAC Accordions Live! ♪ ♪

LIVE & In-Person!

**Sam Reider, Accordion &
Jim Campilongo, Guitar!**

THE SFAC "JAM BAND" WILL GATHER
BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE
ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE

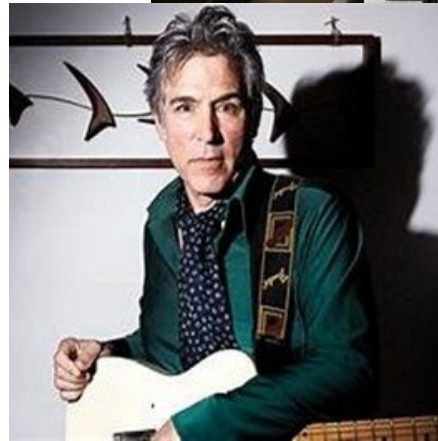
Chetcuti Community Room - Millbrae, CA

2:00 pm Doors Open for Club Jam Band

\$10 members / \$15 non-members

Youth free when accompanied by a parent

*SFAC Members will receive **ZOOM** link via email*



Sam Reider is a Latin GRAMMY-nominated pianist, accordionist, composer, and educator from San Francisco. His work brings together various streams of American music, from jazz and folk tunes to popular song and contemporary composition. He has appeared as a bandleader and soloist at major festivals and venues around the world and his performances and original compositions have been featured on NPR, PBS and the BBC.

Reider grew up in San Francisco, California. At Columbia University in New York City, he majored in American Studies and fell in love with folk music. This set him off on a journey that has taken him from back porches and dive bars to concert halls and major festivals all around the world. Representing the U.S. Department of State as a musical ambassador, Sam has traveled to China, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Estonia, Turkey and Azerbaijan, carrying his accordion on his back and collaborating with international artists.

Reider is a passionate and dedicated educator and a lifelong student. He holds a B.A. in American Studies from Columbia University and an M.A. in Music Composition from San Francisco State University. He is on faculty at St. Mary's College in Moraga, CA where he teaches jazz, improvisation, and composition.

Jim Campilongo was born in South San Francisco, California. When he was nine, he discovered the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Campilongo's career began in the mid-1970s. He studied guitar in San Francisco with Bunnie Gregoire, who taught him to embrace many genres of music, including the work of jazz guitarist George Van Eps and country singer

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Performing for SFAC April 19 Sam Reider, Accordion & Jim Campilongo, Guitar!

John Denver. He used green stamps to buy his first guitar. One of Campilongo's biggest influences at the time was blues guitarist Roy Buchanan.

When Campilongo was seventeen he began performing with local bands **Radio City**, **The Rick Slyter Band**, **The Chromatics**, and **Nancie and the Neighbors**; and went on to play with Marcus Fillinger and the San Francisco "World Beat" scene that led to a stint in the **Renegades of Funk**.

In 2002, he moved to New York City and formed his **Electric Trio**, which toured Europe and Scandinavia. Additionally, Campilongo is a published guitar teacher and contributing editor for **Guitar Player Magazine**. Campilongo's TrueFire instructional video "Sonic Tele" continues to be a best seller along with his popular, homespun "Lessons By Mail", offered on jimcampilongo.com. Campilongo's virtuosity and originality has inspired a generation of guitar players. Jim recently moved back to the Bay Area to continue his career & studies while enjoying the Bay Area quality of life while being closer to his family.

These short bios only scratch the surface of the experience and accolades these internationally recognized musicians have garnered. For more information on Sam Reider, see samreidermusic.com and for Jim Campilongo, see jimcampilongo.com

Beware the Ides of March... Unless You Play Accordion!

March Meeting Review - by Tom Lewellyn

Shakespeare's soothsayer warned Julius Caesar to beware the Ides of March — but for members of our accordion club, March 15th, 2026 held nothing but good music and great company. We gathered at Piedmont High School for a lively meeting that proved, once again, that the accordion is alive and thriving.



The afternoon kicked off with a jam session, ably led by **Joseph Martin**, that drew approximately 15 accordionists — a wonderful turnout that filled the room with energy and harmony. There's nothing quite like the sound of

a roomful of bellows breathing together, and this session did not disappoint.

Following the jam, a stellar lineup of soloists took the spotlight:



Paul Grazzini, a junior at Piedmont High School and a student of Mike Zampiceni, has been playing for just two years — but you'd never know it. A multi-talented young musician who also plays piano, sax, and sings, Paul dazzled the room with *Tropicana*, the dreamy *Fascination*, and the crowd-pleasing *Barbara Polka*. A bright future ahead for this one!

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Annabelle, playing for four years, brought the house to its feet with a spirited Tarantella — the perfect antidote to any Ides of March gloom. Her sister **Jennifer** offered a moment of elegance and lyricism with *Clair de Lune* and a graceful *Tyrolean Waltz*, a lovely contrast of classical beauty and alpine charm. And their father, **Anand**, impressed with two ambitious pieces: an original *Impromptu in D Minor* and the breathtaking *Hora Staccato* — a true showcase of technique and musicality.

Joseph Martin (photo unavailable) took us on a sentimental journey with *When You Wish Upon a Star*, a Disney medley, and the evocative *Memories of Paris*. Charming, heartfelt, and beautifully played.



Ken Schwartz returned to the stage after a long hiatus — he hadn't played since July — and you never would have known it. He came back swinging, reminding us all that once the accordion is in your soul, it doesn't leave.

Mike Zampiceni delivered perhaps the most wide-ranging set of the day. He opened with a soulful *Autumn Leaves*, complete with a gorgeous chorus of improvisation, then shifted gears for an up-tempo take on the Beatles' *Norwegian Wood*, followed by Dave Brubeck's iconic *Take Five*, and closed with the smoldering *La Cumparsita* tango. A tour de force!



Closing out the soloists, **Jane Tripi** (photo unavailable) transported us to Scandinavia with a delightful program of Nordic folk music: a Swedish tune, the charming *Mosquito Polka*, and a lovely Norwegian Waltz — *Røragen*. The perfect finale to a memorable evening.

All in all, the Ides of March proved to be nothing to fear — at least not for accordion lovers. It was an afternoon of remarkable music, warm camaraderie, and the kind of shared joy that only live music can bring.



We continue to seek volunteers to assist with writing our monthly event summaries.
Please feel free to contact us at info@saccordionclub.com

ACCORDION AMBASSADOR ADVENTURES

by Pamela Tom



Bonnie Birch, one of the Northwest's finest accordionists and community leaders will be performing at the San Diego Accordion Club which meets at Covenant Living at Mount Miguel on April 12, 2026. Bonnie has a versatile repertoire of American, European Continent (French, Italian, etc.) and classical music.



Membership Update

By Robert Cooperstein

We welcome 3 new members of the SFAC: **Cookie Reese** of El Cerrito, **Steven Piantadosi** of Berkeley, and **Allen Levin** of Fremont. Allen sent us a short bio and photo. In his own words, "I play clarinet, saxophones and oboe. I have been attending Klezmer meetup-classes and was drawn to the accordion. I made the mistake of listening to some unbelievable classical music played on the accordion and decided to jump to Free Bass."



Cotati Rideshare Request

Dorette and Glenn, longtime supporters of the Student Scholarship fundraisers, are seeking a ride from Marina, CA to Cotati on Friday, Aug. 14, before rush hour. Marina is a small coastal town near Pacifica on Highway 1. Glenn no longer feels comfortable driving. Dorette uses a wheelchair, so a van would be ideal. They usually stay at the Best Western in Petaluma, and if a driver can drop them there, I can pick them up and take them to the 4:00 p.m. scholarship fundraiser at Church of the Oaks. Anyone able to help is asked to **contact Sheri Mignano Crawford** sherimignano@gmail.com.

The 2026 Accordion Seminars "EVOLUTION IN THE REALM OF PERMANENT TRANSITION"

This event will explore the accordion as an instrument of constant motion and "permanent transition." Curated by Dr. William Schimmel and sponsored by the Accordion Global Association, the seminars present the accordion as an instrument that continually moves between musical worlds, traditions, and audiences without ever truly disappearing. Its history reflects that flexibility: it has served as a backbone in Jewish ghettos and during the Holocaust, supported Irish dance culture, and moved through many other musical settings. The message is not about fixed answers, but about motion, change, and adaptation. The accordion may fall in and out of fashion, but it always returns in some form. Schimmel describes it as "the taxi," "the architecture of travel," and "the orchestra in a box," emphasizing its portability and versatility.

The weekend ONLINE event runs July 31 through August 2, with master classes at 3 PM and concerts at 4 PM.

Information and Reservations: Accordionbill@gmail.com 917-498-6823, or 212-876-0827

*The San Francisco Accordion Club is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization [EIN 94-3148553] whose purpose is to enhance, promote and stimulate an appreciation for the accordion within the membership and throughout the general public. Donations are tax-deductible and gratefully accepted by using the **Donate** button at www.sfaccordionclub.com*

Accordion Happenings

◆ San Diego Accordion Extravaganza & Band Camp

May 13-16, 2026

SqueezePlay: Kim & Dan Christian

Contact via: SqueezePlay.biz or (719) 459-2061

◆ Rose City Accordion Club's 27th Accordion Camp

May 31 - June 5, 2026

Collins Retreat Center, Eagle Creek, OR

Conductors: Joe Natoli & Gail Campanella

Instructors: John Giuliana & Toby Hanson

rosecityaccordionclub.org

◆ Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration

June 25-28, 2026 — Leavenworth, WA

Sponsored by the Northwest Accordion Society

www.accordioncelebration.org

◆ GR8 IDEAS Digital Accordion Symposium 5.0

June 21-24, 2026. The Grand Resort - Warren, OH

www.thegrandresort.com Email : josephnatoli@gmail.com

No other digital accordion event focuses on digital accordion education as does **GR8 IDEAS**: in depth workshops on the Roland FR-4X & FR-8X, the Bugari Evo, and the Korg Fisa Suprema, audio and video recording tools & music notation tools. Registration provides eligibility to perform in the GR8 IDEAS Orchestra on the Tuesday night concert if you are so inclined. Also, the final night will include a concert by some of the finest digital accordionists on the globe, including Matthias Matzke, Cory Pesaturo, Eddie Monteiro, and Joseph Natoli.

◆ ATG Accordionists & Teachers Guild 2026 Festival

July 8-12, 2026

Salt Lake City, Utah

<https://www.atgaccordions.com/>

◆ SFAC Annual Picnic

Sunday, July 26, 2026

Sequoia Grove Group Picnic Area

1120 Hopkins Ave, Palo Alto

See upcoming newsletters for further details



◆ Cotati Accordion Festival

August 15-16, 2026

At La Plaza Park, Cotati, CA

<https://cotatifest.com/>

Online/Virtual Offerings:

Monthly: 2nd Tuesday 4:30-6:30 PM (free)

Hosted by Laura Niland LauraJNiland@outlook.com

Members -

If you know of an accordion-centric festival or event in 2026 that your fellow SFAC members may be interested in, please contact info@sfacaccordionclub.org



Ron Borelli

Accordionist

Supporting the
San Francisco Accordion Club

Email: RONBORELLI@AOL.COM

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442 Petaluma Blvd North
Petaluma, California 95952

Noon-6pm Wed, Fri, Sat
Noon-8pm Thurs

510-268-4084
smytheaccordion@gmail.com



IS THE ACCORDION STILL ALIVE AND THRIVING?

by Robert Cooperstein and Mr. Perplexity

After reading Tom’s excellent March event review (pages 2-3), I wondered whether my favorite Artificial Intelligence application would agree with his comment that “the accordion is still alive and thriving”. I asked the AI program to include any observations relating my prompt to the Bay Area. Here is what **Perplexity** had to say:

Yes — the accordion is still alive and thriving, though its strength varies by region and genre. Recent and older reporting alike describe a clear revival or continued vitality, especially in folk, traditional, Latin American, Texas Tejano, and experimental music scenes.

Where it’s thriving

The instrument remains especially strong in traditions where it is culturally central, such as Tejano, Norteño, Vallenato, Brazilian styles, and Finnish folk. Coverage also points to active teaching, performances, and intergenerational efforts that keep the instrument visible and relevant. The German Conference of State Music Councils has officially designated the accordion as the Instrument of the Year 2026.

Local accordion communities

The San Francisco Accordion Club is a good example of how the instrument survives through community rather than mass-market popularity. Clubs like that keep players connected, preserve repertoire, and create a social space where beginners and longtime musicians can share the same tradition.

The Cotati Accordion Festival adds another sign of vitality, because it shows the accordion still has a public audience and a celebratory culture around it. Festivals like that help present the instrument as lively, versatile, and fun rather than merely nostalgic.

Why people say it’s back

A lot of the “dead instrument” reputation came from its decline in mainstream pop culture, not from actual disappearance. Younger players, digital accordions, and genre crossovers have helped renew interest.

Bottom line

So the honest answer is: yes, it’s thriving in many niches, but not uniformly in mainstream music. The club and the festival both show that the accordion still has a real community, not just a memory.



♪♪ April's Happy Wanderer ♪♪

SFAC Board & Key Club Functions

Ken Schwartz, President, Kenneth.E.Schwartz@gmail.com

Rosemary Busher, Vice-President,
(510) 220-2931, rosemary@busher.org

Paul Cain paulrussellcain@gmail.com

Robert Cooperstein (510) 207-6009, drrcoop@sbcglobal.net

Elaine Cooperstein (510) 921-9323, elainedc@sbcglobal.net

Randall Hicks (510) 750-6858, hickr01@sprintmail.com

Dominic Palmisano (Honorary) accord47@gmail.com

Anand Joseph (614) 329-9384

Roy Zheng roycraft3@gmail.com

Scholarship Awards:

Mike Zampiceni (408) 569-2579, eclecticguy@comcast.net

Webmaster & Bookkeeping: Randall Hicks

Newsletter: Elaine & Robert Cooperstein, Pamela Tom, Rosemary Busher, Ken Schwartz (*and credited contributors each issue*)

Accordion Rentals: Rosemary Busher

Live Meeting Sound & Amplification: Paul Cain

Live Meeting Zoom Camera & Sound: Ken Schwartz, Roy Zheng

Membership: Robert Cooperstein

Event Photography: Steve Mobia

SFAC Newsletter Ad Policy

Members may place 1/8-page (business-card size) free of charge for one month each year.

Additional ads are \$10/issue or \$100/year.

Monthly ad prices **for members:**

1/8 page: \$10; 1/4-page: \$25; 1/2-page: \$50; Full-page: \$100.

Non-member rates are double.

Contact info@sfaccordionclub.com

ACCORDION INSTRUCTION

San Francisco

- ◆ **Sam Reider** www.samreidermusic.com
sam@samreidermusic.com

East Bay

- ◆ **Joel Weber**
www.joelseastbayaccordionlessons.weebly.com/
- ◆ **Mike Zampiceni*** www.mikezamp.com

Peninsula/South Bay

- ◆ **Mike Zampiceni*** www.mikezamp.com

Outside the Bay Area

- ◆ **Bonnie Birch*** www.bonniebirch.com (Seattle)
- ◆ **Gail Campanella*** GailCampanella@gmail.com
(805) 895-0457 (Santa Barbara)
- ◆ **Pamela Tom*** accordionpam@gmail.com (Davis)

* = remote lessons (Zoom, Facetime) available

SFAC Members Performing Around the Bay

RON BORELLI San Mateo - RonBorelli@aol.com
www.ronborelli.com

JOE DOMITROWICH Entire SF Bay Area –
Joe@JoeDLive.com or www.JoeDLive.com

PAMELA TOM Yolo & Solano Counties
accordionpam@gmail.com

MIKE ZAMPICENI East Bay & South Bay
eclecticguy@comcast.net, www.mikezamp.com

🔗 Appreciation for our Donors! 🔗

Sincere Thanks to those who generously donate to support the SFAC. These members have made donations during our current (October 2025 – September 2026) membership year:

Paul Aebersold, Lorna Anderson, Scott Anderson, Anthony Bologna, Ron Borelli, Gail Campanella, George Chavez, Elaine & Robert Cooperstein, Edward Crnich, Tony David, Xavier & Candace de la Prade, Sarah Gronquist, Heidi Hansen, Lorraine Inaudi, Arleen Johnson, Jerry Keifer, John Lister, Linda Lonay, Franco & Susan & Lorenzo Lucchesi, Nora Mazzara, Steve Mobia, Karen Marie Mokrzycki, Sabrina Moyle, Laura Jean Niland, Colette Ogata, David Perry, Robert D. & Dil Pisani, Diana Purucker, Duane Quenzel, Richard Rauschmeier, Cat Reilly, Shirley Roller, Tibor Sarkany, Don and Mary Savant, Kenneth Schwartz, John Sullivan, Georgia Sutherland, Bill & Gloria Tapogna, Pamela Tom, Jane & Frank Tripi, Frank Venturelli, Barbara Winter, Carol Whitehead, Andrew Zheng, Roy Zheng.

If you have donated and your name doesn't appear here, please contact elainedc@sbcglobal.net. We so appreciate the support and want to be sure you are recognized.

San Francisco Accordion Club

Newsletter

c/o Cooperstein

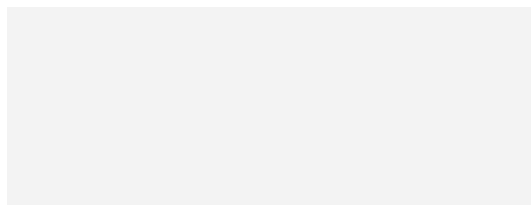
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Upcoming Events — Mark Your Calendar:

- ◆ *May 17, 2026* SFAC Accordion Circle! - Chetcuti Community Center
- ◆ *June 26, 2026* SFAC Accordions Live! - Joe Domitrowich - Chetcuti Community Center

SFAC Sunday Meeting

Accordions Live!

Sam Reider, Accordion &
Jim Campilongo, Guitar

Sunday, April 19, 2:00 pm



Millbrae Chetcuti Community Room

Civic Center Plaza/Library Plaza

450 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae, CA

SFAC Monthly Meetings:

Plenty of *free parking in Library lot*

Accessible location

Close to public transit

Join us in Millbrae for fun & great music!

SFAC members will receive ZOOM link via email

Watch your email for details, or contact

info@sfaccordionclub.com

There's no substitute for live performance! Please plan to attend this event in person: \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members, 18 years and under free with parent.

Doors open at 2:00 pm. Featured performer 3:30 pm.

<https://www.facebook.com/SanFranciscoAccordionClub/> 