

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
SAN FRANCISCO  
**BAY AREA  
ACCORDION CLUB**



APRIL, 1994

## APRIL MEETING

By *Bob Berta*

The April meeting was presided over by the new BAAC President, **Marian Kelly**. She is filling in the remainder of **Dominic Palmisano's** term.

**Frank Panacci** took the floor and talked about our new "trial" location and the change of meeting date for our May meeting. Ladies Night will be held in Donworth Hall at 22nd and Eucalyptus in San Francisco, just behind Stonestown. Due to popular demand, we have moved it back to the first Monday, so be sure May 2nd is on your calendar. **Frank** says the new location has about twice the space of our current Park and Rec building, has a stage and a kitchen. He makes it sound terrific; we hope there's a great turnout so we can all tell **Frank** how pleased we are with the result of his research.

Since the new meeting date would conflict with the Monday night accordion orchestra practice, the orchestra group has kindly changed their practice night at the House of Parties to the *fourth* Monday.

**Frank Montoro** gave a report of our financial status. Our accounts currently total \$7,417. Amounts

spent during the past month include \$406 for the newsletter (two months) and \$100 for rent.

**Frank M.** also reported that we would not be having the Masons to share the expense of the Elks' Club this year. Therefore we won't be making as much money as we have in previous years. Picnic day is really a time for us to get together as a "family". He also reminded the members that those who wanted to play should see **Ed** or **Frank P.** regarding a time slot. Tickets will be ready by the next meeting. Co-chairs **Frank** and **Algis** are still willingly accepting offers of organizational help.

**M.C. Domenic Saso** introduced the entertainment for the evening...or tried to. Unfortunately, we had a couple no-shows, which presented a few awkward moments. Please folks, if you agree to play, understand that we're really counting on you. If you can't make it at the last minute, kindly let **Ed Massolo** or **Frank Panacci** (Program Committee) know.

However, those musicians who *did* come made the night a very entertaining one. First up was **Clyde Forsman**

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**May 2, Monday.** Ladies' Night at BAAC. And what a line-up! Diana Gutkin, Lee Woodall & Val Kieser, Barbara Ann Barnett, Renate Bixby with Irmgard Wynn, Norma Parsons, Gina Avola, Marjorie Konrad, Marian Kelly, and (perhaps) Michelle Gallandre. This is also Election Night.

**May 3rd, Wednesday, 7:30 PM.** (Note change of date!) BAAC Board Meeting, Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. (415) 589-8409.

**May 15th, Sunday, 2:00 PM.** Art Van Damme and his Quintet. York High School Auditorium, Chicago. Call the Chicago Accordion Club for details: (708) 464-5379

**June 5, Sunday.** BAAC Annual Picnic, Elks Club, Palo Alto. Save the date! The June general meeting, which would ordinarily be held on Monday, the 6th, has been cancelled.

**June 12, Sunday 2 PM.** Myron Floren in concert with Lou Fanucchi. Afterwards, dancing to Gordon Kohl's orchestra. El Cajon Performing Arts Center, 210 E. Main Street, El Cajon. sponsored by ALSI (San Diego Accordion Club). Call Theater East box office for reservations *now* (619) 440-2277.

cont. on p. 4



cont. on p. 5



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### General Meeting Format:

Let's have some dialogue about the format of our general meeting. Your Board is discussing the question of how we might modify our general meetings to keep interest high. We are considering several possible changes, and we would like your input.

First, since BAAC's beginnings, two hours or so of each meeting has consisted of members and guests playing "in concert", using a formal setting where the performer moves to a stage, and the audience sits down and listens quietly. We have therefore all enjoyed a wide variety of musical styles and abilities. There are at least two down sides to this approach. One, many members are reluctant to play solo accordion in front of a formal audience, so the Program Committee has to work hard to find enough players for each meeting. And two, we have limited the time for socializing to intermission and the minutes before the start of the meeting, so that there is likely to be a buzz of conversation in the back or, currently, in the kitchen. You may think of others.

We are thinking about (but not agreeing upon) making some of the members' playing more *informal*: i.e. they will play one at a time, but the rest of the attendees may either sit and listen or move around the room and schmooze, as they wish.

Later, we could listen to one or more persons formally for less time. Hopefully, this would bring forth a few previously reluctant musicians.

We are also considering raising the door fee and bringing in more guest artists, so that our members would be assured of hearing excellent accordionizing at almost every meeting.

Second, we could modify meetings by expanding our highly informal business meeting to a more structured but limited period of time which would include a report from the president on the Board's activities and decisions, opportunities for members to question or discuss those activities, plus anything else related to the club or the accordion in general which members would like to talk about.

Other ideas have been suggested. We might serve food at meetings, either regularly or not; we might encourage group playing by publishing either music or lists of songs in the newsletter, then schedule time at specific meetings where everyone would play those numbers....a club band, as it were.

I'll ask for your ideas on this subject at the May General Meeting. You are, of course, also encouraged to call or write with any input you may have.

### Donation to Cotati Festival

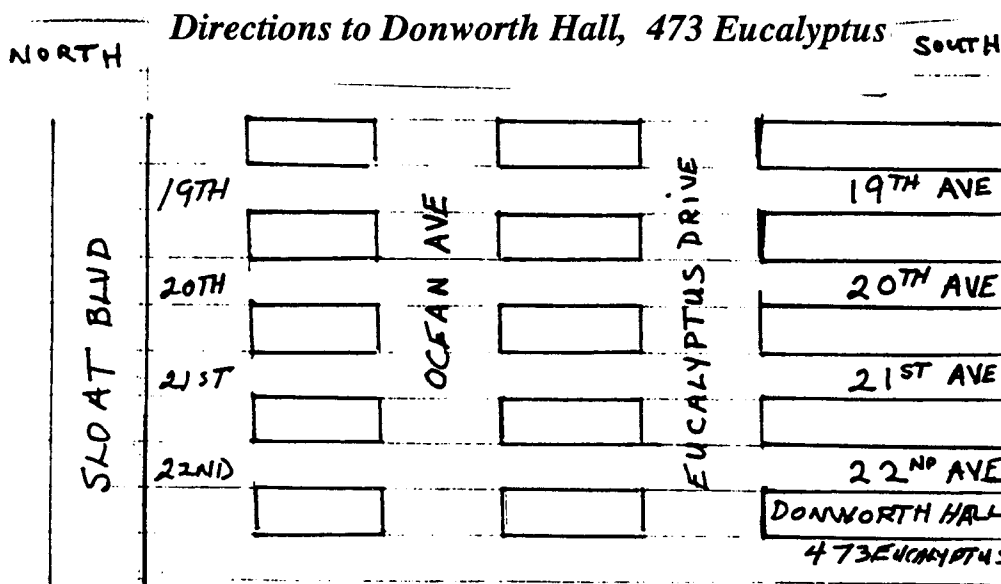
At our April board meeting, we decided to recommend that BAAC donate \$500 to the 1994 Cotati Accordion Festival. The membership will be asked to discuss and vote on this question at the May general meeting.

### Other items:

- John Molinari spent a fascinating few days as a member of the orchestra accompanying Luciano Pavarotti for his recent concert at San Jose's new Arena. He reports that the famous tenor is quite svelte, as 90 pounds have recently vanished. Pavarotti is still very particular about the details of his concerts. He worries about both himself and his supporting cast. John had to rent tails for the occasion; his part was briefer than he would have liked but very specific as to which shift he had to use. And, even though Luciano sang "old chestnuts" such as Italian favorites, the words were prominently displayed for him lest he forget. Makes for quite a story!

- We have agreed to provide 30 minutes of accordion music for a big bash put on by the city of Daly City on Sunday, May 22nd from 1:30 to 2:00 in front of City Hall. A very large crowd is expected. If anyone person (or a group) would like this exposure, please call the BAAC number, 974-9210.

Marian Kelly, BAAC President



**NOTE:** Coming north from the Peninsula, you cannot turn left onto Eucalyptus from 19th Avenue. Either go through Stonestown Shopping Center, or go past Eucalyptus to Ocean, where you turn right. Then two more rights put you on Eucalyptus. Continue across 19th Avenue to 22nd Street. See you all Monday, May 2nd!



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### ACCORDION BAND PRACTICE

All BAAC members are welcome "baac" to our old hall on the *fourth* Monday of each month (please note change of evening). There is no door charge, courtesy of Roy Lagomarsino.

Domenic Saso is the conductor; refreshments are no-host.

Bring your accordion and a music stand and join us! Stay to jam afterwards. Remember...the *first* Monday of each month, from 7:00 PM until you can't squeeze anymore, at the House of Parties!

For info, call Roy at (415) 282-3288 or Domenic at (415) 587-7557.

See you there!

## BAAC Annual Election

It's that time again! Our bylaws designate May as the month when we elect a slate of officers and a 5-member Board of Directors for the upcoming year (July 1 through June 30th).

The Nominating Committee, headed by Josephine Hornbrook and Ed Massolo, presented its recommendations at the April meeting and took nominations from the floor. It was a quiet event, though, as no one who was willing to accept was nominated from the floor. Therefore, the slate includes only one person for each office; no office is contested.

Accordingly, the vote in May will be a voice vote and will proceed quickly.

Here are the Committee's nominations:

President:	Frank Montoro
Vice President:	Bob Berta
Recording Secretary:	Josephine Hornbrook
Treasurer:	Algis Ratnikas
Financial Secretary:	Glenn McClelland

And for the Board of Directors;

Marian Kelly	Frank Panacci
Ed Massolo	John Puppo
Joe Smiell	

## April Board Meeting

### Synopsis

- Treasurer reported \$ 7417 in the bank. Our insurance company (\$1 million liability) is raising this year's premium by approx. \$150, to \$775. Frank is checking for alternatives.
- The election in May will be conducted by a voice vote. According to Roberts' Rules, a written ballot is unnecessary since no office is contested.
- Picnic is coming along. Most pressing need is still people who want to play. Frank will rent a sound system from Bronstein.
- Ladies' night has a terrific lineup! The Program Committee has done a wonderful job.
- Meetings will be held starting in May at Donworth Hall, 22nd and Eucalyptus for the next several months. Union Español is still a possibility, but, even with Tony Di Bono's influence, will be considerably more expensive than anything else we have tried. We may nevertheless schedule a dinner meeting there so members can see for themselves.
- A long discussion was held concerning the format of the general meeting. Marian told of the Chicago club's ideas and successes. She will open the issue for suggestions at the May meeting.
- Guest Tom Cordoni encouraged the board to hold an actual business meeting at each general meeting. The format could take several forms, but he emphasized that he and others felt that the membership must be more involved in the Board's decisions.
- BAAC will have an informational table only at this year's Cotati Festival. We will not attempt to sell anything because no one was interested in taking on the big job of organizing a booth.
- The Board will recommend that we donate \$500 to Cotati this year. The membership will vote on this issue in May.
- Our California non-profit application has been approved. The Federal application is far more complex; a decision on how to handle it was tabled. MK.

*April Gen'l Mtng. from p.1.*

of Those Darn Accordions! He played a polka titled "Fisherman from Bodensee." Then he played a Swedish piece "Hamersforsang Brug"



*Clyde Forsman*

which is about a waterfall in Sweden, as I recall. To continue his program of ethnic music Clyde next struck up a German piece called "Lustig Ist Die Zigeunen Leben" which I think means that the gypsy life is a happy life. Finally he made it a lot easier on yours truly when he played a piece that I can spell..."Beer Barrel Polka" and to top it off, he accompanied his own singing. He informed the audience that he thinks he is the last member around

popular "Time on My Hands." Then a particular favorite of mine, "Pietro's Return." For those who have played this (or attempted to), Bob's skillful bass work was especially appreciated.

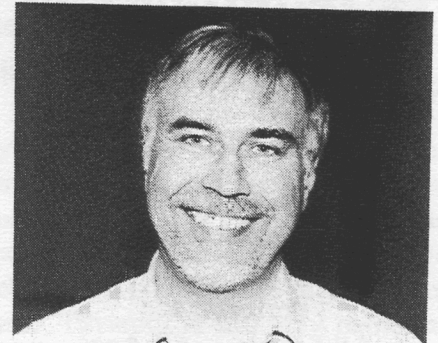
Filling in for the missing musicians were Ed Massolo and Frank Panacci, who played "El Rio," a really neat set of variations on "Carnival of Venice" and the "Pennsylvania Polka." It is obvious that Ed and Frank really enjoy playing together and every time they play (even on short notice) is a special occasion at BAAC.

Rob Campanella was up next. After a discussion of his name (Rob?? Bob?? Roy?? How about a vote?), Rob broke into a nice Spanish piece, followed by a French one. He finished up with the "Clarinet Polka." Rob's recently acquired but well developed skill with the button box is tempting me to try out one of those diatonic accordions someday....might be fun!

After intermission, the Nominating Committee presented a slate of recommendations for officers and board. See the little article on p. 3.

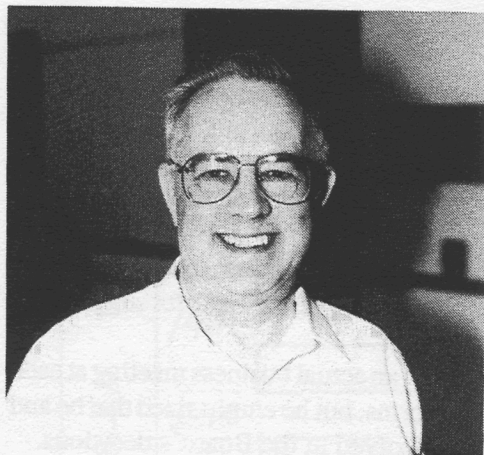
Algis Ratnikas introduced a piece

dent, Peter Di Bono. He played "Marianation Polka" by Gylling, "Stardust," "Fascination," and a beautiful rendition of "Old Man River." When Peter plays, he epitomizes the



*Algis Ratnikas*

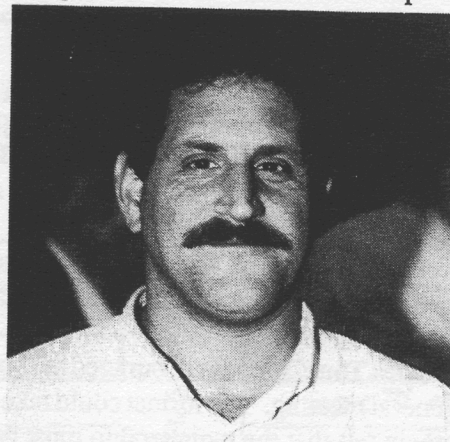
attributes of the accordion, especially the ability to introduce subtle nuances with the bellows. Peter's playing reminds me of an accordionist who was explaining his instrument to another person. He pointed out the keyboard, bass and chord buttons, the various switches to change the sounds and so on. The person noted that there was a bellows on the accordion and wondered what it was for. The accordionist replied, "Without the bellows, the accordion doesn't sound much better



*Bob Smith*

from the Swedish Singing Society.

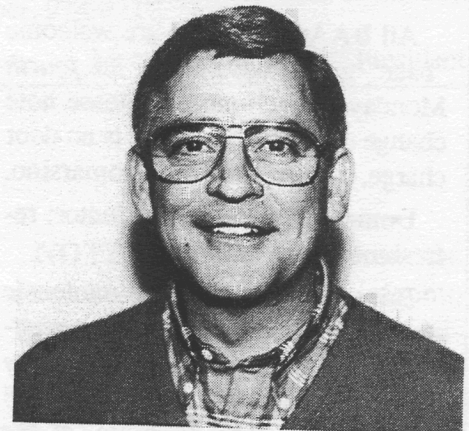
Next up was Bob Smith, who played an Italian march called "I Will Remember You" followed by the ever



*Rob Campanella*

which he composed but which still doesn't have a name. He followed with many variations on "Minka."

Last to entertain us was our past presi-



*Peter Di Bono*

than a piano."

Don't forget the new location and date for our next meeting. Hopefully this location will be "The Place" that we are looking for. See you there!

## Accordion Practice

The following advice was purloined from a 1936 volume written by Alfred d'Auberge and published by O. Pagani & Bro. of New York, N.Y. It's probably "old hat" to hardened club veterans, but it's offered as professional assistance for less experienced members... maybe some of the veterans will find it interesting as well.

### "General Rules for Practicing

1. Have a regular routine of work. Outline your daily scales, finger exercises, arpeggios, etc. Add the schedule for the week to this, and then stick to it.
2. Always practice slowly and with constant application. Brilliant playing depends on clarity of enunciation, not on speed.
3. Get the best possible instruction. A good teacher will not only show you "how to do," he will show you how to "learn how to."
4. Never make technical studies just so many notes. Apply to mechanical work the same maxim given to scale work, "Not scales for the sake of scales, but sing, sing!"
5. No matter how slow or fast you practice, always give careful attention to the projection of the rhythmic pulsation.
6. Analyze your playing position; relaxation is necessary so that no minute part of energy is wasted on nerve strain or unnecessary motions.
7. Use the fingering that suits you best and makes the passage easiest. Don't be afraid of original fingering, but if possible, avoid complicated fingerings.
8. Don't merely hear yourself, listen with the same critical sense that you would use on another performer. It is easier to be critical than to be correct.

For your general musicianship, follow these maxims:

- Read as much new music as possible.
- Have at least an elementary knowledge of harmony.
- Keep your repertoire alive by playing as often as possible in public.
- Study only the best. As Bach advised, "Life is too short to study everything."

*Excerpted by Denny Huff*



*Ed Massolo, Frank Panacci*

## Mark Your Calendar, cont.

**July 4th**, July General Meeting. Donworth Hall, 7 PM.

**July 4-9**, Kimberley Int'l Old Time Accordion Championships featuring Myron Floren and Anthony Galla-Rini, Kimberley, B.C. Canada. Sign up for competition or accommodations. Call (604) 427-4877 or fax (604) 427-3922.

**July 24-29th**, Fifth Annual Galla-Rini Accordion Camp, Silver Falls Convention Center, Sublimity, Oregon. (See Val Kieser's ideas on p. 6.) Then call John Bonica (of Accordion World) at 503-244-2545 or 503-257-9648.

**August 27, 28th**. Cotati Accordion Festival.

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## Galla-Rini Accordion Camp, Silver Falls, Oregon

by Valerie Kieser

I learned about the Galla-Rini camp two years too late: until 1992 I didn't even realize there was such a thing, and yet it had gone on for two years already! I learned about it by finding a copy of Accordion World with a camp flyer insert while visiting Gordon at Colombo one day early in 1992. My first reaction (which is the same most people have) was: "I don't play well enough for something like this."

WRONG!! On reading further, I noticed that the camp offered something for everyone, at every level of competence, from beginning to expert. I was still a bit skeptical as to whether I was "good enough," but asked my husband whether he'd like to take a trip to Oregon with me. He was game, so I began a FAX dialogue with Ellen and John Bonica of Accordion World. They quickly convinced me that I would love camp and would learn a lot—and that I definitely was "good enough."

Well, the camp turned out to be a real inspiration. What an experience! It made me realize how much I really love the instrument, the music, and the people associated with it. I was a low-intermediate player, loaded with enthusiasm but not much expertise, coasting along on the lessons I had had in 1948 to 1951. I can say without hesitation that no one who has ever played a note on the accordion could possibly fail to learn something from this camp! In fact, even my non-musical husband learned a lot just from being there, meeting Mr. Galla-Rini and making friends.

Silver Falls State Park Conference Center is located approximately 20 miles east

of Salem in Central Oregon. It is in a rain-forest setting, isolated from the outside world. The large lawn that serves as a common area is surrounded by the rustic (but well-equipped) cabins in which we live, plus the large dining room/kitchen building (the food is incredible!), and the activities building in which we have our classes and ensemble work with Mr. Galla-Rini and the concert on the final night. All

accordion sounds wafting from all the cabins at (almost) all hours of the day and night!

Anyone fortunate enough to know Anthony Galla-Rini, to listen to his astounding ability on the accordion, and to his endless tales and anecdotes about his fascinating past, will surely treasure these moments for a lifetime.

The trip was a great vacation for my husband, John, too: he was able to take advantage of the endless miles of beautiful trails, catch up on his reading, make friends, and—lucky for me—serve as built-in photographer and videographer for camp photos and performances!

BAAC members Frank Schlotter and Anne Metais also attended camp last year. Anne came all the way from Lyon, France! (See accompanying picture.) It would be wonderful to have some more BAAC representatives

here this year. FOTA and ALSI are both well represented, as are many other accordion clubs around the country. The cost is quite nominal: a total of \$450 includes tuition plus room and board for the entire week! (Cost of room and board only is

\$240.) Now I can hardly wait for the 1994 camp, which will be my third year. It takes place during the last week of July. Anyone wishing information about camp is welcome to give me a call at (510) 531-4836. I have the flyers and all the pertinent facts.



of this is surrounded by a lush green forest with a network of hiking/riding trails. Who could ask for a more gorgeous setting? Add to that all the beautiful music, with

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## Impressions

by Enio A. Huhtala

Occasional rumblings by insensitive and uninformed individuals downgrade the accordion as a musical instrument, and imply that it is good only for folk music. This disturbs many good musicians and highly trained accordionists. This has prompted me to spend some time with the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Public Library to research the beginnings and development of several well known instruments for comparison and argument.

Since our modern accordion is based on a free reed vibrator, let me describe that first. It consists of a flat metal frame, forming an elongated slot, in which a narrow strip of metal fastened to the one end of the slot is free to vibrate rapidly as air is forced through the slot. The size of the slot and metal vibrator determine the frequency, or pitch, of the vibrator. Reeds are used in instruments as follows: 1.) Free reeds vibrating in pipes as in an organ. 2.) Free reeds vibrating in a reed compartment and reinforced by air chambers of various shapes and sizes, as in a harmonium. 3.) Free reeds set in vibration through a valve but having no reinforcing medium as in an accordion or concertina.

The history of this basic free reed vibrator, which makes our modern accordion possible, is clouded in antiquity. Known well before the eleventh century, it was finally introduced to Western Europe as a viable component of an ancient Chinese wind instrument in the nature of a primitive portable organ called a "cheng." The shape of the cheng resembled a closed teapot, to the top of which were fitted bamboo pipes of graduated lengths. It was furnished on the side with an "insufflation tube" curved like a swan's neck, or teapot spout, to which the musician placed his mouth to supply the volume of air required.

A cheng was first given to Professor Christian G. Kratzenstein of Copenhagen for inspection in 1799, whereupon he invented a small pneumatic organ fitted

with free reeds, the first of its kind, called the "harmonium." The archetype of the accordion is the cheng or Chinese organ, between which it and the harmonium form a connecting link structurally. Improvements in the construction of the accordion produced the concertina, melodeon, and the melophone. In the year 1829, the accordion was developed by Damian, in Vienna, the same year in which Sir Charles Wheatstone invented the concertina in England. Paralleling them, the French developed the melodeon. Many similar instruments appeared during the following century, but very few other than the concertina and the accordion have survived.

Here are corresponding periods of development of other instruments for comparison:

### Guitar

The earliest pictorial representation of the guitar in Western Europe is dated AD 1180. The guitar is the precursor of the viol, which is the ancestor of the violin. The viols were used extensively from the 15th to the 17th century, but were gradually supplanted by violins. The types of violins used today are patterned after those made by Nicholas Amati (1596-1684), Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737) and by Guiseppe Guarneri (1666-1739).

### Lute

The lute family of instruments was adopted from Persia by the Arabs and was in general use in the 16th and 17th century, but declined rapidly in the 18th century, even though J.S. Bach wrote a Partita for it. The mandolin is a descendant and the only modern survivor of the lute. There are only two varieties of the mandolin, both Italian. The Neapolitan, best known, has four courses of paired strings tuned in unison,

and the Milanese has six courses of paired strings in unison. Mozart and Beethoven both wrote scores for mandolins in operas in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

It appears that the first concertinas and accordions were developed a hundred years later than the classical Italian violins. Had Mozart and Beethoven been familiar with the accordion, doubtless they would have written music for them. Since we hear good folk music from violins and from accordions, and good classical music from accordions and violins, what's the beef?

## REMINDER!!

Art Van Damme's first CD, appropriately titled "State of Art." is available! It contains 18 selections from 8 albums, including: *Wave, Laura, Cheers, Shiny Stockings, Cute, Here's That Rainy Day, I Get a Kick Out of You, All the Things You Are* and more.

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## Review: Northwest Concert Video by Denny Huff

Our Accordion cousins from the great Pacific Northwest recently sponsored a terrific concert and saved the performance for posterity on video tape. The tape offers an opportunity to hear a variety of outstanding accordion music, get a close look at four leading accordion players and observe some excellent musical technique. The Concert was sponsored by the Northwest Accordion Club and Petosa Accordions.

The opening act, John Simkus, had a tough row to hoe. In addition to being the lead player, he had been asked, when he arrived at the Seattle airport, to replace Joe Morelli. But those Chicago boys are tough, and John, who's the president of the Chicago Accordion Club, was more than equal to the occasion. He started out with the comment that it was still snowing (remember that white stuff?!) in Chicago and they were all looking forward to spring as he played "I Remember April." John is a Jazz aficionado and many of his numbers reflected strong jazz overtones. I particularly liked his presentation of "Watch What Happens." John closed with a fine introduction of the next performer, Ken Olendorf—who, coincidentally, also began his musical career in the Windy City.

Now, we all know Ken. He was a guest at a BAAC meeting last year, and his concert performance contained all of the class, talent and charisma which we saw in April '93. On a sad note, Ken's mother had passed away the previous day, and he dedicated one of his numbers to her memory. The audience observed a moment of silence in tribute.

Ken is a college music professor (Jazz Theory) as well as a performer, and it was noted that he will be in Cairo, Egypt (again) in June playing at the Royal Ball for the English Queen. He's performed with such great artists as Bob Hope, Myron Florian, and Donald O'Connor to name but a few. His personal grief notwithstanding, he put on a great performance.

There was a day when Dave Brubeck's

"Take Five" was my favorite song (I still have the LP), and I was taken back several (many?) years when Ken played it. "The Song is You," "That Rainy Day" (dedicated to Seattle), and several other of his selections. He began his performance acoustically and then moved to his accomplished electronic style.

As a fledgling accordionist, I haven't even heard of many of the great accordion players, let alone had the opportunity to hear them play. So the next artist, Horace Lazzari, was a great treat for me. He made it all look so easy. Horace was born in Canada and studied under Alf Carlson. Along with Leo Aquino and Joe Morelli, Horace was one of Carlson's top three students and was known as the "Canadian Boy Wonder" when he was nine. It wasn't hard to see why.

He played many great numbers and did multiple encores, but his unqualified best was the Overture from the "Barber of Seville." It took several minutes to calm the audience down after this number, which Horace admitted was a test of musicianship and endurance. (He passed the test with flying colors!) Other great offerings included "Fantasy Polka," "Dancing Butterfly," "Dance of the Comedians" (another blockbuster), "Mosaico Espagnol" and "Caprice Viennois"

My hat's off to Horace, who was a tough act to follow. Chuck Berger had drawn the short straw, and when he followed Horace he noted that although his accordion had many of the same notes which Horace's had, he had difficulty playing them in quite the same sequences! But he did a great job. If you were at Cotati last year you will remember Chuck.

He's a nightclub performer from Portland specializing in the Big Band sound. He has been playing the electronic accordion for over 30 years and is one of the pioneers in that area. He did several medleys including one of Latin selections and another in Lawrence Welk style. He's also an accomplished vocalist which he demonstrated on several numbers including

"Harbor Lights." My personal favorite was a Swiss Waltz which he said had been handed down over the years in his family. I was lucky enough to live for a period within view of the Central European Alps, and Chuck's authentic presentation awakened pleasant alpine memories.

I'm sure I could enjoy an evening in one of Portland's clubs listening to Chuck Berger.

So..... if you'd like to expand your acquaintance with great accordion players and styles, hear some good music, and support a fellow accordion club, you may want to order one of the tapes from Seattle. \$19.95 plus \$2.00 postage. Cheap at twice the price!

Order from Joe Petosa at 313 N.E. 45th St., Seattle, 98105.

### *Keyboard Award to Di Pippo*

Jazz accordionist Angelo Di Pippo is being honored by Keyboard Magazine, and you can read about it in Keyboard's June '94 issue. Angelo won Keyboard's 1993 Readers' Poll for Best Accordionist. His new CD, *Arthur Street*, (which, by the way, was sold at BAAC's Cotati booth last year), was reviewed in the April Keyboard Magazine as follows:

"On accordion—or, as the liner notes carefully point, MIDI-free "acoustic accordion"—Di Pippo blasts through a jazz standard set. His sensual bellows technique fans his blazing solo lines, breathes life into rich chord voicings, and proves that air, in the hands of a master, can be a rich addition to the recipe for swing".

Interested? *Arthur Street* was produced by Stash Records, 140 W. 22nd St., New York, N.Y. 10011.

Editor's Note: I haven't checked Tower Records (since I already own this CD), but I'd be willing to wager that they carry it!



## ACCORDIONS, ACCORDIN' to GORDON

### ALL ABOUT MUSETTE

Most players do not realize there is a good chance their present accordion can be tuned with musette or can convert to musette by changing one or two sets of reeds.

To obtain a musette sound, the accordion must have at least 2 clarinet (middle octave) sets of reeds. By tuning the low bassoon set to A-440, one clarinet set to A-440, and the second clarinet set to A-445, you achieve the Italian musette sound whenever you engage a switch that will combine both clarinet reeds together.

If your accordion has only 3 sets of reeds on the keyboard, 1 set low bassoon, 1 set clarinet, and 1 set piccolo reed, obtaining a musette sound is more complicated. You must remove the piccolo reeds, rebuild the reed block, install a second set of clarinet reeds in place of the piccolo, and tune as indicated above.

If you have a 4 set unit, (1 bassoon, 2 clarinets, 1 piccolo, Italian musette can be had by tuning 1 set of clarinet reeds to a different pitch than other three sets.

Know the musette you want, as it can vary. The Italian musette is popular because the sound is more subtle than the French musette sound, since one reed set remains at the usual A-440 pitch. The French musette tuning is more dramatic, with greater separation between the two clarinet reeds, and one result is that chords using all reed sets may sound a bit

strange. Other possibilities between these two extremes are German musette, Irish, Cajun, and a musette in between.

Try to hear the different type musettes before you decide on the type you wish. With a quick demonstration, I can show you how easy it is to hear the differences.

When you add musette, you thin the reed tongue. Later, should you wish to remove it, you must thin the reed tongue on the other end weakening the steel reed tongue. Moral: don't add any musette tuning if you aren't certain that you really want it.

Another cautionary note: never allow anyone to tune your accordion by adding solder to the steel reed tongue; you will have problems later.

And lastly, all reeds must be in tune *before* adding musette.

Hope this gives you an idea of how Musette is obtained. If you still have questions, you know how to find me!

#### Note from the Editor:

Part II of Don Nichols' fine article on tuning will be printed next month. There just wasn't enough space for it this time. My apologies to him and to anyone else who was looking for it here.

## Ahvenainen Report

by Denny Huff

Our hero, at least my hero, is alive and well here in California. Veikko Ahvenainen played at the German-American Club in Santa Cruz in March, and there was a contingent of BAAC faithfuls there to enjoy each note.

The concert was typical Veikko, and included many songs which we've heard him play previously. Personally, I could listen to "A Holiday for Bellows" at least another hundred times before it would become repetitious, but the real attraction of the concert was the opportunity it presented to get close to Veikko.

Not only was the gathering relatively small, which gave almost everyone front row seats for the concert, but for the rest of the evening Veikko was available for socializing. This pleased Rob Campenella no end - how many Ahvenainen tapes do you have now, Rob? (I'm up to seven myself.)

And a special treat was in store for old school (and old world) dancers. After the concert and an intermission, Veikko took the stage again and warmed the hearts of the local German community by playing Waltzes and Polkas for the next hour. It was exactly the right offering for the right audience.

There is still at least one more Veikko concert date yet to come. (I believe it has been cancelled. Ed.) I can't promise it will be as informal as personal as Santa Cruz, but you might want to consider attending.

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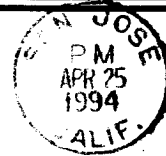
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