

BAAC PAGE

Dedicated to the accordion and related instruments through fun, service & education

GUNS OF AUGUST

By Val Kieser

President Lou Soper called Paul Magistretti up to the stage to talk about the newsletter, which was late because the July meeting was a week late (because of Fourth of July) and the layout for the newsletter was complex [Ed. note: It was mailed in plenty of time, since people as far away as Novato and Detroit got it 2 & 3 days before the meeting. I think we have to clearly mark it First Class. But we'll shoot for earlier mailings, too.] Most members received their newsletters on time, but a few did not and weren't sure whether there would be a meeting tonight, and thus attendance was somewhat light.

Although our new sound system is excellent, Lou informed us that with an additional \$500 we could buy a remote mike to add to it, and donations for this are most welcome.

Lou urged everyone to come to the BAAC picnic August 12, outlining all the fun things planned.

Lou then reminded us that election time is upon us again, and we need nominations for two board members. Other officers/directors were elected last year for two-year terms.



South City Society Jam entertain the audience at BAAC's August meeting

Lou strongly recommended that everyone check out our website, www.BAACaccordionclub.org. John Seckman did an excellent job.

Then Lou called Joe Smiell up to the stage, gave a brief description of Joe's role in the history of the Club, and presented him with a plaque and a lifetime membership similar to the ones awarded to Vince Cirelli and the founding members at the Tenth Anniversary dinner-dance (which Joe unfortunately was unable to attend). Joe made a few remarks, including some words about our legacy going back to the earlier *San Francisco Accordion Club*, which was founded in 1914.

Then the music portion of the meeting began, with Lou Casalnuovo as MC. Thanks, Lou! You did a great job!

Our first musical presentation of the evening by Vince Cirelli, was something exceptional: Pietro Deiro's accordion, which has been painstakingly and lovingly restored by Vince over the last several months, was featured for all to see! Vince described in detail the restoration, and then played that gor-

geous instrument for us! The accordion, originally made in 1917, was rebuilt in 2000—its second start in San Francisco! The accordion has four sets of reeds. Vince even stripped down the black keys, made of black ebony wood. He did no tuning on the accordion—and the sound was mellow and beautiful. The tuning sounded fine to me—and the tone quality was like an organ. Vince played some Golden Oldies: *O Marie*, *Sharpshooters March*, *Tesoro Mio*, *Darktown Strutter's Ball*, *The Night Was Made for Love*, *Ain't She Sweet*, and a bit of *Five Foot Two, Eyes*

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Vince Cirelli plays Pietro Deiro's accordion

August 2000

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- Las Vegas Accordion Convention
- The Big BAAC Scene

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BAAC PICNIC A HIT

This year's picnic was a solid success. Everyone had fun in a lovely spot at Nature's Friends Center in Oakland. Why not? It was a beautiful day filled with the sensual overload of

donate accordions? Then, we had a nearly endless raffle with prizes of CDs, wine, plants, games, two \$50 dinners and videos. There were even children running around and helping out—it was



Jim Firpo, Lou Casalnuovo and Lou Soper at the BAAC picnic

better than being in a time warp in the fifties or seeing American Graffiti again; it was now. Then, along came a sing-along followed by Name-That-Tune for prizes—Frank Montoro and Sharon Walters fought to a split decision, one win each. After that there was accordion playing by our Ensemble, jazz featuring Lou Soper and the superb Dutch player Dick Van Rooyen. Then, everyone settled in

pungent Eucalyptus, sunshine and accordions—you might say, the hills were alive; people played and strolled and nobody was shy.

A few steps here or there and tunes changed like your brain was a radio. The food was wonderfully prepared and served by Dominic and Frances Benedetto. Thrown into the mix was the fabulous view. I even think BAAC made money.

But that wasn't all. There was a door prize—an excellent accordion donated by Dennis Stoscher and won by Jim Firpo—who says nice guys don't come in first? Also, that they don't

while Frank Montoro was a one-man Big Band on MIDI for dancing. Big surprise, Tony Lovello

dropped by and jumped onto the stage and jammed for a half hour. Tony is a generous performer—he even donated videos for the raffle. Lou Jacklich schmoozed. Jim Holliday and Evelyn Baulch cut a rug. Clyde Forsman had a good time. Cake and watermelon

were in full supply. All in all it was a great day with some of the best people you'll ever meet and we hope to see more of you next year. Bob Berta is right when he says the Golden Age of the Accordion II is now.

All in all it was a great day with some of the best people you'll ever meet...

TEACH SPEAK

Each month we will be printing tips from accordion teachers & others that we hope will be of interest to our readers. We invite everyone to submit any short piece of advice.

Inch Worming It

by Steve Albini

When learning a difficult piece of music, learn it measure by measure. Learn the first measure well before you go to the second measure. Once you have learned the second measure, put the first two measures together. You can now go onto the third measure and repeat the process until you finish the piece. If you practice in this way you will be surprised that by the time you learn the piece, you will also have it memorized. Remember to practice slow and pay attention to details such as fingering, rhythmic figures and dynamics.



ADVENTURES IN GALLA-RINI LAND

By Richard S. Schiller

Hello Everyone! Who would have thought that I would ever go to an accordion camp for 5 days in Oceanside California? But with the gentle persuasion (yeah, right; how about intense pressure!) by my friend Val Kieser, I finally broke down and agreed to go, along with Joe Smiell, Bart Beninco, Joe Greco, Gwynn Lister, Ann Matais, Bob Smith and Sharon Walters.

Talk about s-c-a-r-e-d ! I was being thrown in with the likes of John Simkus (president of the Chicago Accordion Club and a stellar jazz artist), Lou Fanucchi (famed Galla-Rini protégé) and Father Joe Baccellieri (noted teacher and performer from Portland). Well, Kjell Holmes, president of the San Diego Club and organizer of the event (along with his very able and charming assistant, Judge Victoria Eriqat), welcomed us with open arms, and within a day they had us functioning like one big happy family. We had morning orchestra rehearsals with Maestro Anthony Galla-Rini himself, 96 years young and with a presence that gave me shivers just being there, let alone playing under his direction. The orchestra, 27 members strong and with varying skill levels was gathered from all over the world. We were rehearsed to play for the public four arrangements by the Maestro himself: Intermezzo Sinfonico; Persian March, September Song, and our grand finale, excerpts from the ballet Swan Lake. The varying skill levels of the different parts allowed us all to participate fully in this wonderful experience. In the afternoon we had our choice of several workshops from teachers Smiell, Simkus, Bacellieri, and Fanucchi, learning everything from jazz (Simkus) to technique (Bacellieri & Fanucchi), to approaching the ultimate meaning of music by actually playing (Smiell).

Entering the hall to a standing ovation, Mr. Galla-Rini was shown the respect due a Master; better still, a national treasure.

On our last night together, Thursday, we performed a public concert of our orchestral arrangements under the baton of the Maestro. Entering the hall to a standing ovation, Mr. Galla-Rini was shown the respect due a Master; better still, a national treasure. In fact, wherever he went, he was greeted the same way (applause), it was our small way of showing our appreciation of what this living legend has given the accordion world. The concert was something to behold, seeing the Maestro full of fire and grace, his face glowing, bringing to life his wonder-

ful arrangements: it was pure magic. The audience received our performances with waves of enthusiasm and at the conclusion one gentleman rushed to the stage and gave the Maestro a kiss of gratitude for work beautifully done.

Following the orchestra there were a series of solos by various performers, including Val Kieser, Bart Beninco, Bob Smith, and Joe Smiell, (who brought the house down with his button box virtuosity and was obliged to do an encore). Each player performed beautifully and seemed inspired to even greater artistic heights by the occasion and the presence of the Maestro. What a wonderful time to be had, and what could ever be better? Wel, what about a 50 piece orchestra that included you and other BAAC members!!!!

I can't imagine a better, more elevating and magical experience than to play with the Maestro and in the process learn from master teachers in areas of your greatest need and interest. And say, if I could do it and survive and even flourish, certainly you, or any member can. So, if you want the experience of a lifetime, a magic carpet ride, a through-the-looking-glass good time, set aside five days next July 2001 for a trip to Galla-Rini Land and you'll be forever glad you did.

OF LUNGS AND MACHINES

by Paul A. Magistretti

At our July meeting Frank Montoro spoke of how much he's learned from Joe Smiell about phrasing. Then, he began to play and demonstrate some of the finest musical lines I've heard. Just beautiful. He reminded me that nothing is more moving than hearing that kind of musicality emerge from an acoustic accordion. The effect is unmistakable, too, the instant you hear someone doing it right, you know. Why is that? Well, it's because the music sings, it breathes, it reminds us that all music originated in human vocal expression: from our breathing and the rhythm of our hearts. However, too often phrasing is something accordionists have trouble with. I think it's rarely stressed enough by teachers. Furthermore, I think accordion players in general may be misled by two things: the idea that the bellows is an endless, cyber lung and the presence of a potent rhythm machine lurking in their left hand.

Cyber lung playing (going on and on without a sense of breathing) may come about because the bellows is connected to an arm bone and not to our mouth and lungs. Woodwind and brass players can't dissociate breathing from phrasing very easily. String players are taught first, last and always how phrasing, breathing and bowing are interrelated. Watching Pablo Casals teach his Master Class to cellists, one could see how he focused almost exclusively on phrasing—over and over he worked on that single aspect, telling his students that all music is comprised of audible rainbows (phrases) and that each subsequent graceful rainbow of sound must emerge from the previous one in a continuous chain of beauty and meaning. When he was a conductor at Prades in the fifties and the orchestra was comprised of the world's greatest musicians in every chair, what did he work on during rehearsals? Phrasing and the dynamics necessary to make the phrases sing; again, audible rainbows—the development, shape and flow of a line of music as it relates to the whole. When I watched the Prades rehearsals I saw him interrupt and make continuous suggestions, adjustments and changes with the assembled virtuosi—and every one of his instructions were meant to reveal and clarify the singing line and how it should be played. He often painted word pictures, “It's a storm...it's a river flowing...it's sunshine through leaves.” Everything he did was to adjust and shape the phrase and its dynamics—and bit-by-bit clarity and musicality began to lift its drowsy head. At first, there were only slight changes, but as they added up, astonishing effects began to emerge; what was once fairly beautiful (after all every chair was filled by a world class soloist) became transcendent as the deeper meaning and beauty of the notes came to life. It was as if the music was being sculpted from chunks of beautiful but unformed marble

until it became something carved by Michelangelo in clarity and emotional impact.

Besides never taking a breath, the other force that kills phrasing is the devious nature of the bass machine. This potent machine can do things to you: it can fascinate, stupefy, intimidate, dominate and confuse—but whatever the psychology, the bass machine can often determine not just rhythm, but control and thus deconstruct musical lines with terrible efficiency. I know whereof I speak. I am a non-recovering bassoholic. The bass awed me from the start and as time went on it became my master. It was like the plant in *The Little Shop Of Horrors*, always shouting, “Feed me!” After awhile, all I did was shovel fresh killed treble to it—obviously, I was a lousy player. Yet, to my ears (& memory) I wasn't alone in the accor-

dion world (nor would be today). So, when someone plays as beautifully as Frank, it puts into perspective how rare good phrasing is.

Ponder the bass—Bob Smith fortunately made us aware of its many disguises last month. First, it's exotic—there are lots of buttons where you can't see them—ah, mystery. More

To be fair, most instrumentalists have an advantage; they let other people supply the rhythm—it's like having mom do everything for them except eat and sleep.

than that, it unleashes so many sounds with a few simple moves, that it's addictive to crank up and take for a ride. Also, it's something we've got that other instruments don't—which is a fatal blessing. Accordionists—unlike other instrumentalists—are obliged while still experiencing musical teething to produce both rhythm and melody. Yet, before we can even say m-e-l-o-d-y or learn to take a deep breath, we succumb to the power and speed of our left hands. It's never long before a beginner joins in a schizoid race—a habit that can last a lifetime. Well, the bass is so quick out of the gate that it's like bellows amphetamines. Crank it up and it's off. Before you know it, it's ahead by a length and a half. Around the clubhouse turn it's dominating the field. Lost in wide intervals and brutal runs, the treble drops behind by two lengths. Phrasing looks to finish out of the money. The player cuts every note short fighting to get back in the race at the stretch. Driving for the finish phrasing breaks a leg and stumbles across the line for a place or show.

We've all heard these racy, confused and essentially unphrased performances by accordion players—we've heard them more often than not. I always heard it when I played—except once when I played *Wonderful Copenhagen* as background music for a play and the power of the dramatic image, the mood and the overall effect of the moment dominated me. I found myself playing and breathing with oxygen from a higher aesthetic; I even tried to shape phrases that added to the moment. There was a lesson to be learned: I had played better

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VIVA LAS VEGAS! The First Annual Las Vegas International Accordion Convention

By Kristofer Nelson

I was one of the 230+ people who decided to take the plunge and gamble our money on attending the 1st Annual Las Vegas International Accordion Convention (LVIAC). Being that the event was an unknown and the entry fee was a little steep (\$285.00 for a single), I was skeptical. But now, after having been to the convention, I can tell you that I definitely hit the jackpot!! To borrow a phrase from 1969, the LVIAC was "Three days of fun and music" with some serious education thrown in as well!! The entire event was professionally run. There was no lag time between events. Every event went off as scheduled and there was no waiting for late instructors or performers. Registration knew who you were and had everything you needed to attend the convention. The meals were hot and the ice cream firm and cold. Every element seemed to shine.

When not involved in many of the seminars, master classes, and demonstrations attendees were treated to an amazing array of accordionists. The line-up of artists was befitting an "International" convention as some of the best in the world were assembled to teach and entertain convention attendees. Art Van Damme defines the accordion as a jazz instrument. His style is smooth and effortless. He is a classic example of someone who makes the impossible look incredibly easy. Peter Soave's emotions guide his classical pieces as much as his lust for life guides his jazz & tango performances. He is a superb technician with an artist's passion, both of which are evident in his performances.

Tony Lovello is the ultimate showman. His absolute confidence with his instrument is a spectacle to behold. He plays with incredible force and passion, all the while maintaining complete control of his instrument. To tie the entire package together, he has an amazing rapport with his audience and holds their attention throughout his performance. Gina & Romany Rye (Gina & Norman Brannelli)—Gina is one of the few players that has mastery of the Concerto digital acoustic accordion and Norman has a classically trained voice. Together they blend to create a truly memorable evening of passionate music that plays to a Latin beat. Julian Labro won the 1996 *Coup Mondiale*. Now the French youth is living in the Untied States and studying under Peter Soave. Julian's playing is absolutely top level. His brilliant technique and speed amazed the convention audience as it does audiences all over the world. Steve Balich, Sr. gave the performance of a seasoned professional, presenting a set of toe-tapping dance music that filled the dance floor. Steve



Julien Labro, Valerie Kieser, and Peter Soave in Las Vegas—Elvis was nowhere to be found

Albini also impressed the crowd with his popular tunes, warm vocal talent and confident techniques. Other talented performers were: Jane Christison, Max Carl, Gordon Kohl, Merl Allen Sanders, Nicki & Herb, Aman-Christian Family, Marian Kelly, Steve Trucco, and many others.

Attendees wishing to increase their knowledge of the accordion and its music had the choice of several seminars, master classes and demonstrations almost every hour of the convention. I attended every one I could fit in. From the basic class taught by Gina Brannelli to the master classes of Art Van Damme and Peter Soave. I came away with bags full of educational nuggets, easily enough to last me till next year. There were 33 classes in all! The exhibit hall hosted many of the worlds top accordion manufacturers including: Castiglione, Hohner, Concerto, ORLA, Piermaria,

Weltmeister, Petosa, Bell, Helikon, Melodija, Beltuna, Scandalli, Excelsior, and many others. There were lunches and dinners that hosted a wide variety of well balanced meals and buffets. These meals were the main venue of social activities. Each meal was accompanied by a music program that put smiles on faces and set toes tapping. It was at this time that the convention turned into a community. At these gatherings old friendships were rekindled and new friendships were formed. Everyone in attendance began to realize the scope of the accordion community in the United States and worldwide. There were clubs from all over the United States. A special side note to the evening dinners is that all of the performers mixed

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With all expenses accounted for, I can tell you that the Las Vegas International Accordion Convention was worth every penny.

ACCORDIONS AL DENTE

by Tom Torriglia

What's a more difficult question to answer: What's the square root of 4,987,567 or what's the best accordion to buy. Of, course, everyone knows the answer is the square root of 4 whatever. The debate over the best accordion rages on the Internet, in bars, on airplanes, at wedding receptions if there's an accordionist in the wedding band. Mio Dio! The answer is whatever accordion you like the best.

Some accordions seem to carry a certain amount of respect—for example, Petosa, Excelsior, Giuliotti. People even perk up a bit when I tell them I have a Zero Sette with hand-made reeds. But, most of the time when you tell someone you're buying an XYZ accordion they look at you like you're the biggest idiot in the world. Man, who cares? A friend of mine is buying a new accordion with hand-made reeds. She's ecstatic and that's all that matters. Not my opinion, not your opinion, just hers. "Oh, your accordion doesn't have a tone chamber?" Get over it! Maybe I don't like tone chambers. I have come to realize that there is nothing more subjective than one's realization that "that's the one". Selecting an accordion is very similar to selecting someone with whom you want to have a romantic involvement. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Sound is in the ear of the beholder. I don't care what you think of my accordion (girlfriend). She's my accordion (girlfriend). And dammit, I'm going to marry my accordion (girlfriend) whether you like her or not! So, take that!

Let the debate continue with me. Like my friend I plan to buy a new accordion. Hand-made reeds. 34/72. It will be used mostly for Squeegees' polkas and Italian stuff. So, I need a good musette and bright sound. What's your recommendation? I'm leaning toward a Parrot.

Vegas. Did you go? Not me. The headliners were Romany (ham on) Rye. I saw them at BAAC. They were great—for about 10 minutes. But that's me—like with accordions. You? You loved them? So, that's in your ear.

I volunteer with Music in Schools Today, an organization that raises money for after-school music programs. They also do an Adopt An Instrument program. So, if you've got an instrument of any type (even an accordion) laying around and want to help out a high school kid, give them a call at

415.392.9010. Anyway, each Sunday they have a table out at Stern Grove (during the free concert series) and they pass out literature, newsletters and have petitions for people to sign. I am at the table most every Sunday yakking it up and playing the accordion. Playing the accordion gets people to come to the table because everyone has an accordion story. One of the weekends, Los Lobos performed. As you know, they have an accordionist in the band. I wondered why the BAAC wasn't involved as a sponsor of that event or why BAAC didn't try to get the band to put on a show that night at the Patio Español. Also, other bands come through town that have accordionists in them and BAAC never gets them to come and play or helps sponsor their appearances. I have never understood this. It would be a great way for the club to get exposure (which it seems to want) it might get new people to join the club (which I would imagine the club wants) and it would promote the accordion (which I would think the club wants). For some reason, BAAC never looks beyond itself. Where's your outreach? Where's living up to your motto?

I am starting a new accordion lobbying organization that will help place the accordion more prominently in print ads, movies, TV shows, etc. I am going to pitch story ideas where, for example, the hunky lead character serenades some babe with his accordion (instead of a guitar, piano, flute, etc.) and she hits melt mode before he even get to the chorus of *That's Amore*—or, how about a car commercial and some guy is in the back seat playing an accordion as the car goes zipping down the road—why? Why not? What about a photo of people at a picnic and there's an accordion lying by the blanket. Who's going to tickle whose ivories? Subtle. Overt. Consciousness. Raised. You drink? Take cocktails. I plan to invent and market the hottest drink of the new millennium: the Bellows Shake! What's in it? You tell me and whisper it my ear while we mambo.

Alert! Red beans and newsgroups: Have y'all joined cajunzydecodance@egroups.com?

Next time, I hope to review some exciting new videos—stay tuned!

Viva Las Vegas *continued*

with the attendees. I'd like to single out Art Van Damme, Peter Soave, Gina & Norman Brannelli, Tony Lovello, and many others for staying late and socializing with attendees. You made us all feel really special.

With all expenses accounted for, I can tell you that The Las Vegas International Accordion Convention was worth every penny. Thank you Paul Pasquali of Accordions International and crew for putting on such a dynamic, engaging, fulfilling

and professionally run convention. You can be assured I will be back next year!

Editor's note: An e-mail just received from Peter Soave. The LV Convention was a huge success and a great opportunity for everyone present to share in camaraderie, hear wonderful performances, ask professionals questions and have a wonderful time. Bravo, Paul Pasquali!

Of Lungs and Machines *continued*

than I ever played. I played phrases with a purpose, a mood and towards an end more meaningful than a race. However, I never retained the lesson and for the rest of my career I was off and running—every song a daily double—a medley was a trifecta. Nobody told me, taught me, made me aware of cyber lungs and the curse of the machine.

Non-accordion instrumentalists live less confused lives. They're not any more talented, or smarter—often the opposite, check out Rock guitarists. However, their advantage is they're not caught in a conflict between man and (bass) machine. Fighting machines head-on isn't the answer. We can't expect accordionists to be John Henry, the steel driving man. For even if an accordionist could beat the machine in a showdown, it doesn't solve the problem. And remember, John Henry won just once and died. If you have to fight your accordion that hard, take up the ocarina.

So, it's phrasing, or lack of it, that's a major problem for all musicians and especially accordionists. To be fair, most instrumentalists have an advantage; they let other people supply the rhythm—it's like having mom do everything for them except eat and sleep. Sure, a piano and organ can play a whole score, treble and bass, but they don't have machines; they have to put their bass together from scratch like a free bass player, a bandoneonist or my nona making a pie. So, other musicians aren't more adept than accordionists, they just don't suffer from temptation; they live sheltered lives. Anyway, the next time you hear a great player, take note: their phrasing is what makes them good and they sound the way they do because they're breathing with a human lung, singing with a human heart.

Miscellany

New Members

Two new members! Father Joe Baccellieri of Portland Oregon and Charles McCarthy of Daly City (actually Charlie is a returnee). Welcome to the wonderful world of BAAC, gentlemen!

Nominated

Dominic Saso & Lou Casalnuovo were nominated at the August Meeting to serve on the Board of Directors.

In Memoriam

We're saddened to note the passing of two BAAC members. George Armanino and Roy Lagomarsino. They were fine men, generous in demeanor and spirit and devoted to friends, family and loved ones. They loved good music and the accordion and we cherished their friendship. Our hearts go out to their families and close friends; they will be in our prayers.

Help Wanted

BAAC needs a volunteer to layout the BAAC Page. Experience with Quark Xpress or PageMaker is preferred, but not required. Anyone interested should contact Lou Soper at 510.792.8765.

Would You Like to Join BAAC?

Send a check for \$25.00 to:

BAAC, P.O. Box 318175, San Francisco, CA 94131-8175

TEN YEARS AND COUNTING

No President of BAAC does it alone. We serve through the help of others and at the will of the members. But I would like to personally thank at this time all the fine Officers and members who have served this club so well during it's ten years, people like (but not limited to) Walter Traverso, Rusty Bartoli, Dominic Saso, Frank Panacci, Ed Massolo, Jim(s) Holliday and Firpo, Valerie Kieser, Valarie Morris, Eddie Zarro, Joe Smiell, Lou Casalnuovo, Evelyn Baulch, John Seckman, etc., all our generous performers and every single one of the many unsung heroes and fine people I'm omitting (forgive me). We've been so blessed to have talented and hardworking people lead us, too, people like Peter Di Bono, Frank Montoro, Bob Berta, Dominic Palmisano and Marian Kelly. They've done far too many wonderful things to enumerate and have made BAAC the fine organization it has become. However, at this time I'd like to single out one outstanding person for some special recognition, Marian Kelly. She was always so very hardworking and devoted to BAAC. I'd like to thank her especially for inaugurating and maintaining our initial web site and for having been the newsletter's guiding force and editor for nine years. Marian, you did such an outstanding job for such a very long time it would be difficult to thank you enough. Please let me state for the record, that your dedication and efforts are extremely appreciated by every member of this organization. For all of us and especially for me, thank you so very much.

—Lou Soper.

Boaz Accordions announced a beginner's workshop for children 8–10 with the excellent teacher/performer, Henri Ducharme. It's only \$80 for eight sessions (9/20–11/8) and you can rent an accordion if need be. There's a free workshop 9/10 from 2–3 at the Berkeley location. Call 510.845.1429. This sounds like a good deal to find out if any children within your grasp have the metabolism and soul for an accordion. It may be a chance to save a few young ones from a misspent youth and/or electric guitars.

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Peninsula

Lou Soper

Every Tuesday 3–6:30pm
Moose Club, Colma
510.792.8765



Lou Soper presents Joe Smiell with a certificate of appreciation

Guns of August *continued*

of Blue. Now, the accordion is on its way to Italy, where it will be on display in Ancona, along with other mementos of Deiro. What an accomplishment, Vince! I hope you're as proud of what you did as we are proud of you!

Next up was Bob Smith, who played his version of Joe Smiell's arrangement of *Wedding of the Winds*, which was popular early in the century and found its way onto Carousels, hurdy-gurdies and other automated players including player pianos. He followed with Magnante's arrangement of *Dark Eyes*, with some

touches of his own. Bob's last piece was *La Cumparsita*, with authentic tango bass rhythm and some very fast bass runs. Bob worked hard on all these pieces, and his hard work showed!

Next came Ron Borelli, billed by Lou as "one of the Bay Area's premier jazz accordionists". Ron appreciated the compliment, but said he hadn't planned to play jazz tonight! So, he started with a beautiful, smooth and mellow arrangement of *La Spagnola*. Then he played a long introduction (or was it a separate piece?) that turned out to be a lovely, jazzy version of *I Love Paris*; he then finished his performance with *Granada* with nice glissandos and fancy finger work—all of which he did while standing! Wow!

A change of pace for the next performer, and a really special treat: Joe Smiell on Austrian button box. First, Joe played a Boarischer, a Bavarian dance that is a bit faster than a Schottische, a bit slower than a polka, and having a lilt or "soul" all

its own. The Boarischer was born in the 15th or 16th century, and grew out of the Gavotte. Joe then described the Austrian button box, which is a diatonic instrument, meaning for the most part that any given button plays a different note when the direction of the bellows is reversed. It also has a unique and brilliant sound. Then Joe played part of the *Goldgruber Polka*, which has a fun bass solo in it. He finished with the *Coal Miners Polka*, demonstrating how easy it is to play the button box: All you have to do is hold your four fingers together and hit the right rows (since the coal miners couldn't separate their fingers for playing, after a long day working in the mine)!

The next player was Frank Montoro, playing acoustic accordion. We all know from the past that Frank is a master of MIDI, but you really missed something special if you didn't hear him play the acoustic accordion! First he played a beautiful

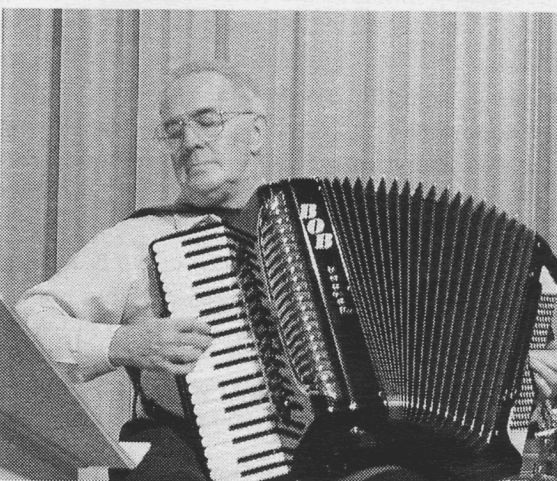
waltz (I didn't get the name), followed by *Dance of the Spanish Onion*, *Moonlight in Vermont*, *When You Wish Upon a Star*, *Just the Way You Look Tonight*, *El Choclo*, *Under Paris Skies*, and some other waltzes. Frank described how much he has learned about phrasing and articulation from Joe Smiell (true for many of us, Frank!). Superb performance, Frank.

Our last music act was a performance of Big Band oldies by South City Society Jam. They looked great in their tan slacks, white shirts and

continued on page 11



Ron Borelli, "one of the Bay Area's premier jazz accordionists"



Bob Smith performs

THE BIG BAAC SCENE

By Valerie Kieser

A Chamber of Honors

Our SF Accordion Chamber Ensemble (ACE) has begun work on music for the new fall season. We already have somewhere in the neighborhood of 200 pieces in our repertoire, and Joe continues to write and arrange new music for us. It's amazing how you can learn sight-reading when you are in a "sink-or-swim" position! We get something new to sight-read every week. Whether it is something we might use in a concert or whether it is just for sight-reading practice, Joe always has something new for us. He continues to amaze us all!

Meanwhile, in recent weeks we have performed two successful concerts—one in Mt. View and one in San Mateo—and have several more coming up. We have been short at least one or two people for our summer performances, because of vacation schedules, but we have a number of pieces arranged for fewer than ten parts, so that we can always come up with something beautiful to play.

We're hoping to play for the club very soon. We hope you enjoy what we have prepared!

The Tunnel of Fun

We would like to have greater participation in both the BAAC Fun Band and the BAAC Ensemble. We have loads of fun in both groups, while improving our sight-reading and playing style. And it's all FREE!

Both of our BAAC musical groups are going to start up again in late September: The BAAC "Fun Band" and the BAAC Ensemble. Our schedule of practices is changing somewhat, due to the fact that BAAC general meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month beginning in September.

We have the second, third and fourth Wednesday of each month available for practices at Moose Lodge on Mission Street in Daly City/Colma. The Fun Band practices once a month, and the BAAC Ensemble practices twice a month. So, our new schedule will be: BAAC Ensemble on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month; and the BAAC Fun Band on the third Wednesday of each month.

You're missing the boat if you don't avail yourself of the enormous talent and generosity of our own internationally renowned Joe Smiell, who writes beautiful and playable arrangements of all kinds of music for our BAAC Ensemble! It doesn't matter what kind of music you play at home or are attempting to learn, or at what level you play: your playing and your sight-reading will improve!

For the BAAC Fun Band, which will resume practices on Wednesday, September 20 (see below), we have some wonderful music planned—familiar to most of you—for playing at accordion club meetings, picnics, Christmas, outside events or wherever we want. Best of all: Our own Sharon Walters, a very talented accordionist and teacher, has agreed to conduct our band! Those of you who were at the picnic will recall that

Sharon played along with us and helped enormously to keep us together, and band members really appreciated her! Please come and join us for group playing as well as great fun! You'll love it!

Please mark your calendars: The next BAAC Fun Band practice will be at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, September 20 at Moose Lodge Daly City; and the BAAC Ensemble will resume practices on Wednesday, September 27 at 7:00 PM at Moose Lodge Daly City. For information, and to confirm a given practice, call Val at 510.531.4836.

Camping With The Maestro

BAAC was well represented at this year's Galla-Rini Accordion Camp, held at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, July 23–28. BAAC members attending were Dick Schiller, Bob Smith, Joe Smiell, Val Kieser, Sharon Walters, Anne Metais, Jana Maas, Gwyn Lister, and Bart Beninco—nine out of 30 participants is pretty good!

Workshops on different aspects of accordion playing were offered by four teachers: John Simkus of Chicago, Lou Fanucchi of San Diego, Father Joe Bacillieri of Portland, OR, and our own Joe Smiell. I attended several of them and learned a lot. Each teacher has a special expertise and lots to offer. Also, Joe's informal, impromptu ensemble teaching sessions in the evening were most enthusiastically attended—and they weren't even on the regular schedule!

Several small groups also formed and worked on pieces to present on Dance Night (Wednesday) and also on Concert Night (Thursday). Sharon Walters and Stella Allison gave an especially wonderful performance of a waltz duet. Sharon also joined up with Val and Anne for some pieces, including Maggie Blues, which is in our own BAAC Fun Band repertoire.

Most impressive of all, of course, were the Maestro Tony Galla-Rini himself, and his adorable and adoring wife Dolly, both now in their late 90's and full of life. The Maestro arranged another fabulous group of pieces for this year's ensemble: Johann Strauss' Persian March, Pietro Mascagni's Intermezzo Sinfonico from Cavalleria Rusticana, Kurt Weill's perennial favorite September Song, and, for the grand finale, Tchaikovsky's magnificent Swan Lake Ballet (symphonic excerpt). The Maestro was exceptionally pleased and gratified at this year's Concert Night performance.

Joe Smiell also conducted a large group in playing Kamennoi Ostrow, a gorgeous piece by Rubinstein (a different Rubinstein from the one everyone knows).

All agreed that camp was a terrific musical learning experience, as well as lots of fun, and plans are already underway for next year's camp, at the same time and probably the same location (although there were concerns that the food was not the best this year). Stay tuned!

Calendar of Events

September

- 2 5th Annual Cajun Festival
Noon to 7:30
Laguna Park on Morris Street near the Community Center. Sebastopol, CA.
Great music, food, people, fun. 3 bands: Gator Beat, Crawdaddy, The Iguanas. Admission is \$7 children under 12 free. Authentic Louisiana food will be served including: 1500+ crawfish, duck and andouille gumbo, crawfish etouffee, New Orleans Beans and Rice, and Cajun Dogs.
- Schedule
12pm: Crawdaddy
1pm: Gator Beat
2-3:30pm: Iguanas
4pm: Crawdaddy
5:30pm: Gator Beat
More Info: 707.823.9100 This is a non-profit event with proceeds going back into the community.
- 2-4 Sam's Alpine Acres Jamboree & Campout
Monroe, OR
Info: 541.424.2282
- 4 ACR Board Meeting. 7:30pm
Meetings open to members
Herman Sons Hall, 860 Western, Petaluma
Upstairs meeting room
Info. contact Harry Cannata at: 707.838.2859
- 6 Bay Area Accordion Club Meeting, 7 pm
Patio Espanol, 2850 Alemany Blvd. San Francisco
Info: 510.792.8765
<http://www.baaccordionclub.org>
- 7 East Bay Accordion Circle. 7:30pm.
1542 Grant St. Berkeley In the cottage behind the main house. Bring Your Accordion!
Info: 510.548.2822
- 10 Accordion Technique Master Class. 7:30pm
w/ Henri Ducharme. Pre-Register: \$50.00 Boaz Accordions. Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA.
Info: 510.845.1429
- 10-16 Joe Smiell's Intermediate & Advanced Button Box Camp
Norden, CA. Info: 415.832.6938
- 12 Golden State Accordion Club, 7:00pm
Pietro's #2, 679 Merchant, Vacaville
Info: 707.864.2359
<http://direct.at/GOLDENSTATEACCORDIONCLUB>
- 13 Good Time Accordion Club General Meeting, 7pm
Escalon Community Center, 1055 Escalon Ave. Escalon, CA.
Info: 209.545.3603
- 17 Oktoberfest & Kinderfest at Naturfreunde. Music by Joe Smiell Bavarian Band. Info: 415.388.9987
- 17 Intro to Button Accordion. 2-4pm
w/ Boaz Rubin. Pre-Register: \$25.00
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429

- 18 ACR General Meeting, 7:30pm
NEW LOCATION
Herman Sons Hall. 860 Western. Petaluma
Info. contact Harry Cannata at: 707.838.2859
- 20-Nov. 8 Beginning Classes for Children. 5-6pm
8 Wednesdays w/ Henri Ducharme
Pre-Register: \$80.00
Meet the teacher: Sept. 10th, 2-3pm
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67 Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429
- 21 Accordion Salon, 7:30pm
pickPocket Ensemble (CD Release Party)
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429 Fee: \$4.00
- 23 4th Annual Cajun/Zydeco Festival, 10am-7pm
Ardenwood Historic Farm
Queen Ida, California Cajun Orchestra, Motor Dude Zydeco, Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic
\$10 in advance, \$12 at the gate
Located at Crossroads of Hwy 880 & Hwy 84, just east of Dumbarton Bridge on Ardenwood Blvd.

October

- 2 ACR Board Meeting. 7:30pm
Meetings open to members
Herman Sons Hall. 860 Western. Petaluma.
Upstairs meeting room.
Info. contact Harry Cannata at: 707.838.2859
- 4 Bay Area Accordion Club Meeting, 7 pm
Patio Espanol, 2850 Alemany Blvd. San Francisco
Info: 510.792.8765
<http://www.baaccordionclub.org>
- 10 Golden State Accordion Club, 7:00pm
Pietro's #2. 679 Merchant. Vacaville
Info: 707.864.2359
- 11 Good Time Accordion Club General Meeting, 7:00pm
Escalon Community Center
1055 Escalon Ave. Escalon, CA
Info: 209.545.3603
- 12 East Bay Accordion Circle, 7:30pm
1542 Grant St. Berkeley In the cottage behind the main house. Bring Your Accordion!
Info: 510.548.2822
- 14 Savoy Doucet Band
Ashkenaz. Berkeley, CA.
Times & Admission: TBA
- 15 Savoy Doucet Band
Freight & Savage
Berkeley, CA
Times & Admission: TBA
- 15 Beginning Button Box Accordion, 2-4pm
w/ Miguel Govea. Pre-Register: \$35.00
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429

16 ACR General Meeting, 7:30pm
Herman Sons Hall.
860 Western. Petaluma
Info. contact Harry Cannata at: 707.838.2859

19 Accordion Salon, 7:30pm
w/ Carol Denny. (English Concertina)
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429 Fee: \$4.00

12 Composition & Transposition. 2-4pm
w/ Lou Jacklich. Pre-Register: \$35.00
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429

17 Northwest Accordion Festival. 11am-4pm.
(Formerly known as the Day of the Accordion)
Seattle Center House, Seattle, WA
Admission: Free. Info: 206.622.4786

November

5 Composition & Transposition. 2-4pm
w/ Lou Jacklich. Pre-Register: \$35.00
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429

8 **Bay Area Accordion Club Meeting, 7 pm**
Stas Venglevski & Mike Alongi to perform
Patio Espanol, 2850 Alemany Blvd. San Francisco
Info: 510.792.8765
<http://www.baaccordionclub.org>

Ongoing

BAAC Ensemble

1st & 3rd Monday of each Month
Moose Lodge, Daly City
Contact Frank Montoro 650.574.4757 for info

BAAC Fun Band

4th Wednesday of each Month
Moose Lodge, Daly City
Contact Val Kieser 510.531.4836 for info

Guns of August *continued*

red vests, and they sounded great too, as they played *Love Was Made for You and Me*, *Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White*, *Pennies from Heaven*, *Peg O' My Heart*, *Kansas City*, and others—some with vocals.

If you missed this meeting, you missed a really good one. REMINDER: The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 6 (and the first Wednesday of each month from then on, until further notice).

Dear Members,

A gentle reminder: tax-deductible donations for our Scholarship Program and other BAAC Activities are always much needed and greatly appreciated. The more you do, the more we can do together. This club is never more or less than the sum of all of US. Thank you!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



What a busy August we are having. This month's meeting at the Patio Espanol was very entertaining thanks to the members who volunteered to perform. We are trying to set a schedule of players each month in advance so it can be published in the BAAC Page. Steve Albini, entertainment chairman, was on vacation for the past two weeks so the program was filled in at the last moment. Everything went smooth, however. Don't forget, we will be meeting on the first Wednesday of the month from now on. This is much better as the restaurant will be open and you can come early and order dinner before the meeting if you so desire.

I would like to say a very special thank you to Jim Holliday and Evelyn Baulch for all their efforts each meeting selling the door cash raffle tickets. This is not an easy task but they always wear a smile and a pleasant thank you to

everybody who buys a ticket for the 50/50 drawing.

The picnic was wonderful and the food outstanding. A great big thank you to Frances and Dominic Benedetto and their kitchen staff for such great food and plenty of it. It is people like this that makes this club so special.

Cotati is upon us again and we could use a few more volunteers to help with our booth for a couple of hours. If you plan to go to Cotati and will cover the booth for a couple of hours, we will provide you with a free ticket to the festival. So call any of our officers and let them know.

September is the month for paying your annual dues. Enclosed is an envelope for your convenience. Dues are \$25 for member and \$5 for spouse or companion. A total of \$30 for the year. This is a great bargain now that each member gets two free workshops a year and a reduced door charge for all of our monthly meetings.

Looking forward to greeting you at Cotati, sharing a few jokes and fine music.

—Lou Soper

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