

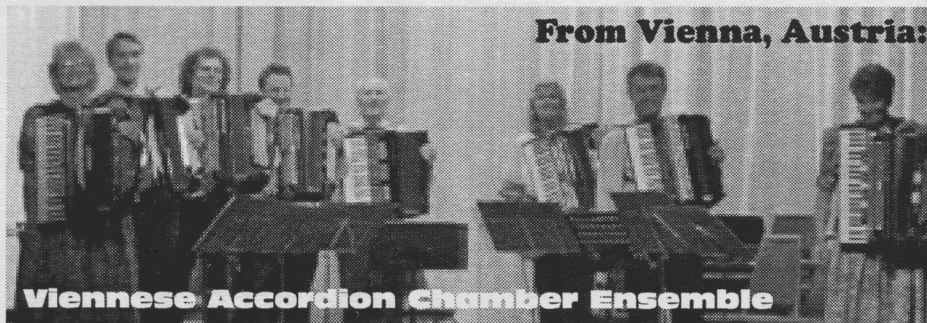
BAAAC PAGE

Dedicated to the accordion through fun, service & education

August 2001: ALL THE WAY

By Robert K. Berta

From Vienna, Austria:



Our Hot Days of August Meeting—August 1, 2001 proved to be one of the most outstanding meetings of our ten year run with over 200 people in attendance—we had not just one great ensemble, but two outstanding groups appearing for the first time on our stage.

Richard Yaus has brought together the talents of Doug Collins, Marian Kelly, Norma Parsons and Joe Simoni to form a group called *AbsolutAccord*. During this performance Mike Zampiceni filled in for Norma who was indisposed, but is now doing fine. The quintet plays arrangements by one of Richard's teachers (George Schwenk) gathered from when Richard studied and lived in Munich, Germany. Wow! What amazing arrangements. Also, Richard is a formidable instructor and conductor as demonstrated by *absolute* (it's a well-named group) beautiful precision playing; tight bellows control and a superb use of dynamics. The selections included *La Cumparsita*, *La Vie En Rose*, *Under Paris Skies*, *Tango in D*, the *Tritsch Tratsch Polka*, *Non Ti Scordar Di Me*, *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Ciribiribin*. Many of you have heard or probably even played some (if not all) of these selections yourself, but that wouldn't have prepared you for what they played. This was truly a remarkable performance, filled with clarity of expression, infallible musical line and above all, feeling; we are really looking forward to an encore performance.

The second part of the program was devoted to our special guests from Austria, *The Viennese Accordion Chamber Ensemble*. These eight artists perform with acoustic accordions (including one bass accordion), plus an electronic accordion and provide an exquisite sense of unity of feeling and expression. They are as accomplished as any chamber orchestra playing on any combination of instruments. They started with a selection from Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusic*, certainly a signature piece for any Austrian musicians. And Mozart was followed by the second movement

from Bach's *Concerto in D minor* (after Alessandro Marcello, BWV 974) and a really nifty *Irish Suite* composed from traditional Irish folk tunes. When the suite culminated in variations on *Danny Boy* it brought tears to our eyes (Irish or not) and received a tremendous ovation. The outstanding selection for me was a medley of Gershwin tunes mostly from *Porgy and Bess*—I thought they were especially good on handling the orchestral feeling of the opera and I wished they could have performed a suite from it, which would have given me a greater sense of form

and emotional impact given the ensemble's expressive power. I know that *The Sound of Music* isn't Austrian, but it was wonderful to hear them take on this American classic. It was like hearing the tunes through the lens of other sensibilities, putting a twist on how we looked at them and they looked back at us looking at them. That's mixed up, but the music was wonderful—see, music is an international language after all. In light of international sensibili-

From San Jose:



ties, the Ensemble next took us to Argentina and performed Astor Piazzolla's *Fear* and one of my favorites, *Oblivion*. Their hearts were more than equal to *Nuevo Tango* and Astor's dark, haunting passion. The well-known *Czardas* by Monti provided an opportunity for a two of the members to reveal their individual virtuosity. The Ensemble ended where they began, albeit a century later, with Viennese music: Strauss instead of Mozart—they selected what I consider one of Strauss' best loved compositions, *Voices of Spring*. The final number was Strauss's *Pizzicato Polka* and they moved into encores, standing ovations and waves of appreciation from the audience as everyone stamped and clapped to *Radetzky's March*—for a moment I thought we were at the Wien Staatsoper hearing Andre Rieu finishing up and the Viennese audience going crazy. And if you stayed until the very, very end,

The September Meeting will mark the taking of our First Official Club Picture and we want all our members in it. This is an historic occasion. PLEASE BE THERE AND TAKE YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE!!! Bring accordions; we want as many members as possible in the picture with instruments—like in the GOLDEN AGE OF THE ACCORDION. Bring spare accordions to loan to others who don't have an instrument.

Also, part of the September meeting will be a unique workshop with Joe Smiell. He will let everyone participate whether they have an accordion or not, so they can see how ensemble playing works. Joe will provide musical parts for a simple tune and everyone from beginners to advanced players can play. People who don't play can take part too! Play two notes on a borrowed accordion—or play percussion. If you have your own drums, etc., bring them, bring extras. This promises to be a BAAAC Guinness Record Ensemble—or, at least a Heinekin one.

(All the Way concluded)

just as they were about to climb into their vehicles and leave they formed a semi-circle at the door and sang an Austrian song of friendship. What a wonderful group—they played as one with crisp, perfect timing and demonstrated sensitive expression and heartfelt feeling. And not only are they wonderful musicians they are obviously friendly, dedicated and generous people. It was a perfect evening of joy and art.

Accordionrama

(The Hohner Accordion Symphony Orchestra)
Rudolf Würthner, Conductor

Program: Johann Strauss Jr: Perpetuum mobile; Franz Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsodies No. 2; Rudolph Würthner: Concert Etude on a Theme of Paganini's La Campanell; Carl Maria von Weber: Invitation to the Dance; Johannes Brahms: Hungarian Dances Nos. 5 & 6; Gioacchino Rossini: William Tell Overture; Grigoras Dinicu: Hora Staccato; Amilcare Ponchielli: Dance of the Hours. LP: 1961; CD: 1997; The Omega Record Group.

A CD Review

By Henry Doktorski

(Founder of the Classical Free Reed Website)

Credit for much of the growth of the classical accordion must go to the Hohner company which began manufacturing accordions shortly after the turn of the century. Christoph Wagner wrote, "In the late 1920's, Hohner came up with a new idea for enlarging the market for the instrument. They decided to improve its public image by turning it from a folk instrument played by ear to a respectable instrument played from sheet music. A model accordion orchestra of

around thirty skilled amateurs was put together and toured extensively by bus throughout Germany and the neighboring countries presenting the new concept to the public. Hohner also began to publish sheet music of classical pieces and established a college for accordion teachers to raise the standard. The response was enormous."

This is a recording by the famed Hohner Accordion Symphony Orchestra,

recorded at Baumgarten Hall in Vienna in 1961 and digitally remastered for compact discs. It is amazing. Such a beautiful sound. Full. Refined. Sophisticated. There is great contrast here—which is an absolute requirement for realizing the voices of great classical orchestral selections. The group achieves its contrast in no small regard because of the inclusion in the ensemble of the *electronium*, a primitive electronic accordion invented and marketed by Hohner sometime around 1951. I may write "primitive," but the sometimes brassy and sometimes flute-like sounds it makes contribute wonderfully to the musical texture. [We may note the Vienna Ensemble's concept being prefigured by the Hohner group.]

The music the orchestra performs on this recording, interestingly enough, consists of that very music which accordions were prohibited from playing in Germany of the 1930s. Wagner continues, "When the Nazis came to power, the growth of the accordion slowed down. The propagandists claimed that the accordion was a

'nigger jazz instrument' for its close connection with modern American dance music. The Nazis tried to stop accordion bands from playing classical music which was considered an 'abuse of the music of our great masters.' The president of the *reichsmusikkammer*—the highest institution controlling music in the Third Reich—declared that 'now is the time to build a dam against the flooding of our musical life by the accordion.'"

Fortunately the decision to ban the accordion seemed to have never been enforced. Perhaps the president of the *reichsmusikkammer* might have actually had a chance to hear the Hohner orchestra in person. [Ed. note: Or, maybe the stupidity of this Nazi idea sank in, whereas their more terrible and tragic notions were carried to horrible conclusions to their shame and the shame of all humanity. Perhaps as noted in a previous edition of BAAC PAGE when William L. Shirer had someone pound on the walls to protest his accordion playing in his Berlin hotel room at night during the 30's it was more than bad temper.]

Of special note is *Hora Staccato* which features the chromatic harmonica playing of Günther Wertz. This CD is something no accordion lover will want to miss. [I've seen it at Borders, Tower, etc.]

ATG Festival in San Antonio

By Kevin Friedrich.

Competitors and guest artists represented nations as far as China, Russia, Republic of Belarus, Australia, Finland, Austria, Lithuania, Germany, USA and Poland during three days of non-stop accordion activities at the Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG) annual convention held in San Antonio, Texas this week.

The Anthony Galla-Rini International Competition for Classical Accordion was won by Alexander Sevastian from the Republic of Belarus. A recent graduate of the Gnessin Institute of Music in Moscow with Friedrich Lips, Alexander currently resides in Toronto, however he is planning on returning to Moscow to begin his post-graduate studies with Lips.

Mika Vayrynen (pictured with ATG President Joan Sommers) from Finland was the headliner at the festival and dazzled participants with his stunning technique and breathtaking musicality during his performances, which included a solo concert and a presentation of the *Five Tango Sensations* by Piazzolla accompanied by the UMKC Accordion Orchestra. It was a rare opportunity to hear Mika in the United States; festival participants were also treated to a workshop offering insight into accordion technique and the latest happenings in Europe.

Standing ovations were also given to the *Viennese Accordion Ensemble Orchestra*, the *Accolage Accordion Orchestra* of Lower Saxony, Germany and for the *ATG Festival Orchestra*, a 70 piece orchestra presenting works conducted by Sylvia Zobek (Austria), Ralf Schwarzen (Germany) and Joan Sommers (USA).

Competitions results are as follows:

ATG/TAA Texas Folk Music Competition: 1st Place: Mike Middleton, USA (\$500.00); 2nd Place: Terry Cavanaugh, USA (\$250.00); 3rd Place: Bernadette Conlon, Australia (\$100.00)

ATG Virtuoso Entertainment Competition: 1st Place: Nina Slyuser-Wegmann, Republic of Belarus (\$1000.00); 2nd Place: Joseph Castorina, Australia (\$500.00); 3rd Place: Bernadette Conlon, Australia (\$250.00).

Anthony Galla-Rini International Competition for Accordion Soloists: 1st Place: Alexander Sevastian, Republic of Belarus (\$1000.00); 2nd Place: Lidia Kaminska, Poland (\$500.00); 3rd Place: Nina Slyuser-Wegmann, Republic of Belarus (\$250.00).

ATG Piano Accordion Championship: 1st Place: Shanxi Upsdell (New Zealand).

ATG Junior National Championship: 1st Place: Shanxi Upsdell (New Zealand)



Galla-Rini Camp 2001 The Joy Continues

By Ron Borelli

The 12th Annual Galla-Rini Accordion Camp has ended and what an unbelievable, fantastic and unforgettable event and learning experience it was for all who attended. I was fortunate to be at this weeklong music camp this year and I must say it is one of those



rare events in life that one shouldn't miss. Not only for the opportunity of playing the great arrangements for Accordion Orchestra by Maestro Anthony Galla-Rini, but also for the instruction available and for the great companionship and society of fellow accordionists. It beats anything and everything. On the most basic level you can't find better information about playing than was available at the Galla-Rini camp. For not only are you privileged to have the Maestro conducting and lecturing every day, but we also received instructions from three great musicians: Joe Smiell, John Simkus and Father Joe Baccellieri.

To give you an idea of our daily routine: we're up at 7:00 am—sometimes our wake up call was Joe Smiell playing a wonderful German tune on the button box—then off to breakfast at 8:00 am and rehearsal begins punctually at 9:00 am conducted by Maestro Galla-Rini. You'd better not be late (I was once and it didn't happen again!). The Maestro rehearsed us diligently until noon, sometimes with only one short break—we needed the breaks more than he did. Then, if we finished our rehearsal early the Maestro presented a detailed lecture on harmony from which I reviewed and learned a great many valuable lessons. While the Maestro is 97 years old his dedication and energy are unbounded in wanting all of us to excel in our art of playing music for the accordion—as I write this, he is looking forward to next year's camp when he will then only be 98. Anthony Galla-Rini is an extraordinary man and musician. He's full of life and witty comments at each rehearsal, lots of stories on the history of the accordion—and he really knows how to bring out the best in accordion orchestra playing, which was proven by our final concert. Anyway, lunch was from noon to 1:00, then instruction from 1:00 to 3:00, at which time we broke for individual and group rehearsals which lasted until 5:30; dinner at 6:00, then the fun really began, all music, accordions and more music and accordions.

After four days of rehearsal we performed our public concert, 4 pieces all arranged by the Maestro. Our orchestra consisted of 30 accordionists and timpani. It sounded fantastic. Even our timpanist who performs in a local symphony was impressed by the sound of our Accordion Orchestra. Also, there were several other smaller

ensembles, as well as duos and soloists at the main event.

Other highlights: daily lectures by our own Joe Smiell, who is a master of articulation for the accordion. Each day Joe conducted a group class, then we had individual lessons, did some rehearsing and then, late night festivities kicked in: jamming, dancing, refreshments and eating. About midnight on our last night Joe played an absolute incredible folk improvisation. I gave him a pen and told him he had to write it down immediately; I'm anxiously waiting for the arrangement of this inspired piece.

All of us were also delighted with the performance of John Simkus from Chicago and the flashing technique of Father Joe Baccellieri. Other highlights included great performances from Lynn Ewing, Valerie Kieser, Anne Métais, Richard Schiller, Bob Smith, and Sharon Walters. All of these performers from our club had great musical contributions to make, some as soloists and some in duets and ensembles: Bob Smith played *In a*

Persian Market Place; a trio made up of Lynn Ewing, Sharon Walters and myself played Joe Smiell's *Trio Study*; Jana Maas of Modesto played a very funny piece of music I couldn't begin to describe it—you'd just have to be there and hear her singing it. The camp's attendees came from all over the world. Mary, our bass accordionist, came from Austria, several people were from



Oregon, there was Brian from Victoria and everyone appreciated Stella Allison from Maryland for her charm and the beautifully written solo pieces she played. There was too much music and there's too little space here to report all the details of the event; it is really, truly something you have to behold for yourself. You are all joined together in close, intimate proximity with great accordion masters and receiving direct, personal inspiration and instruction day after day. It's an indescribably rich experience and where else can you find its equal?

There was one individual that I believe demonstrated just outstanding courage, desire and love of music and the accordion; I can't say enough about her. She was Sundi O'Mara of Rocky River, Ohio. She was just the most dedicated and courageous person in the camp. With two visibly serious disabilities, she performed with the orchestra in a gracious style and was always the first one to sign up on concert night as a soloist. And for her

performance she played a difficult operatic excerpt, doing so with great artistic style. When I happened to look over her shoulder I noticed that the score was written for solo piano and she was transcribing the piano material for both left and right hands for the accordion as she played. She is really to be admired. BAAC has so many members at various levels of accomplishment who could take a cue from Sundi and learn from her courage and stand up and perform like she did. It was beautiful and inspiring!

All in all it was a great event and as with any rich and rewarding experience the amount of information you absorb was up to the individual; however, everything you could possibly want to deepen and enrich your musical life (and maybe life itself) was there for the asking and all you had to do was listen, be open and soak up the new possibilities. Just being there and breathing the air along with the great masters who presented this wonderful accordion event taught everyone great things. Thank you Anthony Galla-Rini, Joe Smiell, Father Joe Baccellieri, John Simkus and the sponsors of the camp, Kjell Holmes and Victoria Eriqat.

Valerie Kieser would like to add a postscript: Anne Métais' husband Bernard was just indispensable. He ran to copy centers several times and literally made hundreds of copies for the camp workshops. He also went to various electronics stores and got the

right cables and connectors so that Father Joe Baccellieri could play a demo CD for his class. He did all kinds of small but very important tasks for us and we just couldn't have gotten along without him. It was all the more generous and appreciated because until just recently retiring our overqualified gofer was a top engineer for Bechtel Corporation.

†Ron's singling out



Sundi O'Mara for recognition is long overdue. Sundi has gone to the camp since its second year (I have gone since its third, ten years now) and she's always an inspiration. I also see her at a lot of the conventions and other accordion events too; she's often at events in Texas and she's a member of BAAC—she's just a super person. Regarding the camp's music; its difficulty has increased over the years, as the performers have improved. Now, it's to the point where most of the players in the Galla-Rini Ensemble Orchestra are quite advanced. The four pieces the Ensemble Orchestra played were: *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* (Bach), *March of the Siamese Children* from *The King and I*; the Tara theme *My Own True Love* from *Gone with the Wind*; and *Finlandia* (Sibelius). They were just gorgeous arrangements, every one of them!

Postscript from Bob Smith: Let me add to what the others have said. There were 33 attendees—including 10 from Southern California and 12 from Northern California. The northern contingent included: Ernst Angst (Fremont), Ron Borelli (San Mateo), Richard Denier (Carmel), Lynn Ewing (San Carlos), Joseph Greco (Napa), Valerie Kieser (Oakland), Jan Maas (Modesto), Anne Métais (Oakland), Richard Schiller (Oakland), Joe Smiell (Oakland), Robert Smith (Livermore) and Sharon Walters (San Francisco). Most of the Northern California people are members of BAAC. One attendee (Mary Lynn Hughes Rueckl) came from Austria, another (Brian Money) from Canada; you might say the camp was an international event.

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The main activity consisted of practicing four pieces arranged and directed by Maestro Galla-Rini [they're noted above by Valerie]. The group did so well at practice that two sessions were shortened and supplemented by Galla-Rini's discussion of chord and bass theory. I think we did very well at the Thursday evening concert, because even the Maestro was impressed. At breakfast the following morning, he came in, raised his cane in the air and twirled it around shouting, "We did it!"

We were all impressed by Galla-Rini's renewed vigor. His living conditions have improved since his recent move. Now he has other people to help him and to help take care of his wife Dolly; for example, he no longer has to prepare meals.

Father Joe Baccellieri, John Simkus, and our own Joe Smiell led workshops at the camp. Joe Smiell's on articulation was excellent. He also led a number of sessions on sight-reading utilizing his own arrangements; it was very rewarding. Joe Baccellieri gave sessions on improvisation with formidable insight. And among other things, John Simkus led a session on playing in an orchestra, conducting and modulation. He handed out a number of intriguing examples of modulations and endings.

The Wednesday night dance was much better than usual. Why was that? Well, there were a larger number of men who could (& would) dance! The dance lasted until 2 AM and Galla-Rini stayed until about 1, much later than in previous years. The Maestro is getting younger every year! We'll have to transcribe upward several keys (decades) that Italian salutation "cent'anni," which means "live to a hundred."

Dear BAAC PAGE Editor: Thank you so much for your coverage of our romance and wedding in the July 2001 issue. We were thrilled and flattered. Henry had so much fun when he performed for BAAC in July 1996 and he still tells me stories about his visit. Perhaps you might invite him again after he completes his Guido Deiro CD; maybe next summer. I've never been to San Francisco and would love to meet all of you! I cordially invite you to visit my website <http://marykaydoktorski.freeservers.com> if you'd like to see some great photos of our wedding. Our warmest regards, Henry & Mary Kay Doktorski.

A Conundrum

Mort Herold, at one time a great American concert accordionist, wrote, "The fact remains that most people who like the accordion don't like classical music, and most people who like classical music don't like the accordion. Admittedly, a tough nut to crack!" The French musicologist, Pierre Gervasoni, wrote, "The accordion's traditional audience does not easily accept 'concert music' by this instrument and generally dislike the most sophisticated works of the current repertoire: Zolotaryov's *Third Sonata* and Gubaidulina's *De Profundis*." I think the members of BAAC have been doing a pretty good job of putting this paradox to rest and appreciating (if not liking) everything that our fellow accordionists play. We've celebrated a range of music from all over the world with open hearts and minds.

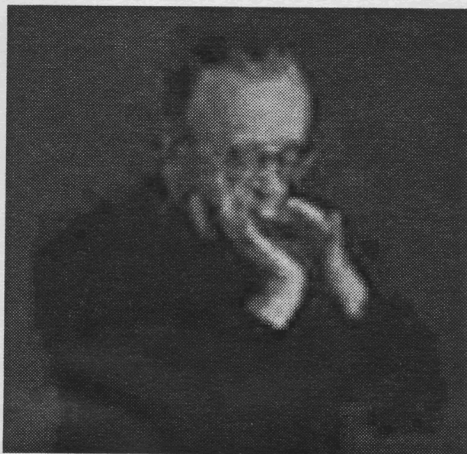
A letter from Italy—Dear Paul: Thanks for you concern. Everything is fine now. The accordion is repaired and my musical activity continues. My older daughter Lunia has been spending the summer in the US. She was present at the August BAAC meeting and said the Vienna Ensemble was very interesting. I'm in contact with Valerie Kieser and she also told me about the meeting. I was sorry I couldn't be there. Best wishes to everyone. Vladimir Kallistov <kallistov@tin.it>

Living Legend An Interview With Larry Adler

(October 19, 1997)

Conducted By Henry Doktorski

[Editor's Note: Larry Adler the great harmonica player died 8/7/01. He was 87 years old and a friend of mine. The harmonica is part of the free reed family of instruments, including the accordion, bandonion, bayan, concertina, sheng, reed organ and harmonium. Long before Piazzolla's free reed stardom Mr. Adler was the world's most highly esteemed representative of our family of instruments. He was admired by major composers who wrote for him and a friend to many talented people in the arts. He was a charming raconteur, writer, composer and a wonderful gentleman. He was one of the few important remaining members from a great age of art and entertainment and will be greatly missed.]



Mr. Adler, I enjoyed very much your performances this weekend. How did you like working with the Pittsburgh Symphony?

Adler: I've never had as much fun working with anybody as with Marvin Hamlisch. He is an angel and if it weren't for him I might have easily cancelled the concerts because of

the sheer pain of walking. I'm eighty-three years old, you know, and have an arthritic knee; that's why I sit during my shows. Marvin and I just tell jokes to each other and occasionally some music creeps in! These concerts have been like no other concerts I ever gave.

Is that because of Maestro Hamlisch?

Adler: Yes, Marvin and I have such a rapport; it's incredible. I hope to do a lot more concerts with him; we're doing one October 25th in New York and we're doing New Years Eve in Chicago. I'd like to do as much as I can with him because he takes all the stuffiness out of giving concerts. I met him last year in London and took him to dinner and told everyone that he's the only man I ever met who can talk more than I do!

Will you please tell how you first played Rhapsody in Blue with George Gershwin?

Adler: I was at a party in New York in 1934 when the host, Jules Glaenger—the president of Cartier Jewelers—suddenly announced that Larry and George were going to play *Rhapsody in Blue*. Glaenger didn't even know if I knew the *Rhapsody*, but he announced it anyway. I had never played it before, but I had heard the piece, so I was confident that I could play it. So George sat at the piano and I started to play the *Rhapsody*, and it was as if two people had known each other all their lives; we played the piece all the way through and when we finished it, George got up, put his hands on my shoulders and said, "You make that god-damned thing sound like I wrote it for you!" From then on I was friends with the Gershwin family for the rest of George's life and for the rest of Ira's too.

Did the Rhapsody become your theme piece? You played it last night with the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops and it is also on your latest CD.

Adler: No, not really, although I'm playing a lot of Gershwin lately, what with his centenary coming next year.

Was the Vaughan Williams 1952 Romance for Harmonica and Orchestra the first big classical piece for harmonica?

Adler: It was, but curiously enough, there were two classical works written before that, by an unknown composer named Jean Berger and another by Darius Milhaud, a very prominent 20th century composer.

Was that piece Milhaud's Suite Anglais?

Adler: Yes, but more attention was paid to the Vaughan Williams piece because he was a kind of Emeritus Professor and God in England. When we played it at the Proms in Albert Hall, Malcolm Sargent conducted it and for the first time in the history of Albert Hall, a new work had to be encored — played twice, and that had never happened before, or since.

That was the very first piece I ever heard featuring the classical harmonica; Karl Haas programmed it during one of his Adventures in Great Music programs.

Adler: I was very pleased that Vaughan Williams did straight Vaughan Williams, he made no concessions to the fact that he was writing for a harmonica; he just wrote a straight musical composition.

The Romance is a beautiful piece. How did Darius Milhaud come to write Suite Anglais for you in 1942?

Adler: I did a concert with Pierre Monteux with the San Francisco Symphony and Darius Milhaud at the time was teaching at the University of Berkeley. He came backstage and said that he would like to write a work for me and he did.

Before 1942 what pieces did you play at your concerts? Transcriptions?

Adler: Yes, I played the Vivaldi *Violin Concerto*, Bach's *A Minor Violin Concerto*, Marcello's *Oboe Concerto*, and I played short pieces by Fritz Kreisler, by Albeniz, and, of course, I played *Rhapsody in Blue* and the great standards by songwriters like George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and Richard Rodgers.

Our focus is on classical music. Do you have any other interesting stories about the harmonica in classical music?

Adler: I'll tell you something very funny. Around 1947 I played at the New York City Center. Villa-Lobos heard me and although we hadn't met, he gave a statement to the press saying that the harmonica was the instrument of the future and that he would write a concerto for Larry Adler. So I met him and I showed him the various possibilities and limitations of the mouth organ. Then I waited and waited and waited, yet nothing appeared. About two years later I heard that he had written a concerto for the mouth organ and given it to another mouth organ player: John Sebastian!

No!

Adler: I was in Paris and Villa-Lobos was in Paris also, so I called him up and he invited me to lunch. I said, "Heitor, didn't you promise to write a concerto for me?" He replied, "Yes! I wanted to write it, I was waiting!" I said, "Waiting? Waiting for what?" His smile illuminated the Champs Elysees and he replied, "the money!"

So Villa-Lobos did write a concerto, but he wrote it for Sebastian!

Adler: Yes, but now John's dead so I'll be playing the work.

How many other classical mouth organists are there besides you and Sebastian?

Adler: Well, there's Robert Bonfiglio and Tommy Reilly in England, Claude Garden in Paris, and quite a few in Tokyo.

Japan!

Adler: Oh, yes, that is a big country for harmonicas. China also.

What advice do you have for young players of the instrument?

Adler: I would tell them: learn some Bach. I think all of the Baroque composers like Bach, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Marcello, etc., they're very good for the aspiring mouth organ player because they write beautiful melodic lines. What I don't like is a mouth organ player who tries to be as clever as he can be. Try to make music; to hell with being clever! And I don't like the blues harmonica at all; I think they all sound alike except for Bob Dylan—who sounds worse!

Is that something that I can quote?

Adler: Oh, absolutely! I've said that if I were dictator of the world my first act would be to forbid Bob Dylan from playing the mouth organ! God, I think he's bad!

I must admit, few people have heard classical music on the harmonica. It is very rare, like classical music on the accordion.

Adler: The blues mouth organ is cheap, my mouth organ costs 3500 pounds [approx. \$5,000], and there aren't many players who can afford that.

I understand you play a Hohner instrument. When did your relationship with Hohner begin?

Adler: It began when I was a teenager. A teacher was sent to the United States from Germany by Hohner to form a group of mouth organ players and he organized a competition, which I won. Three months later I ran away from home and went to New York. From then on, I have been in touch with the Hohner people wherever I played and in fact, I visited them in Germany in the early 1930s. In those days I didn't even know that there was a Nazi movement! Incidentally, Yamaha makes an excellent harmonica and there's a very good firm in Brazil called Hering and also China has a thriving mouth organ industry now.

I've ordered a copy of your autobiography Me And My Big Mouth published by Blake Publishing.

Adler: That's a lousy book and I don't like it; it's ghosted. There was a real autobiography that I did write and it's called *It Ain't Necessarily So*. That one I did write and it was published by Collins. However, it's out of print and the only way to get it is from the libraries. *Me And My Big Mouth* has a certain amount of factual material but the author completely missed my style and my voice. That's why I hate the book.

Can you recommend some of your classical CDs?

Adler: At the moment there are five CDs available. First of all, there's the one that you have in your hand: *The Glory of Gershwin* on the Mercury label, which by the way has sold two million copies.

Congratulations!

Adler: This CD put me in the Guinness Book of Records for

being the oldest performer to release a hit record; I was 80 at the time. I have three classical CDs released by a company called Prestige in New York, one by Pulse (also in New York), one by EMI and one by ASV/New Era. There is quite a bit which hasn't been released yet; RCA has several classical albums and so has EMI.

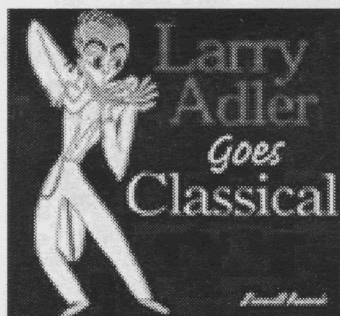
It has been absolutely wonderful talking with you Mr. Adler. I can't think of anything else to say besides thank you very much.

Adler: Not at all! Glad that you called.

Two Larry Adler CDs

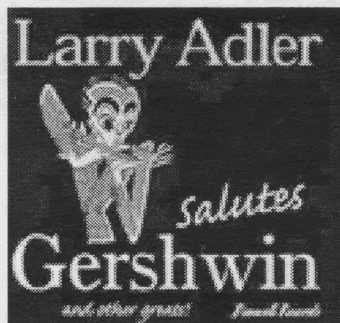
Reviewed By Henry Doktorski
(Reprinted from The Classical Free Reed Website)

Larry Adler Goes Classical



Grigoras Dinicu: Hora Stacatto; Claude Debussy: Claire de Lune; Maurice Ravel: Bolero; Manuel De Falla: Ritual Fire Dance; Maurice Ravel: Pavane; George Enesco: Romanian Rhapsody; Bach/Gounod: Ave Maria; Hugo Alfvén: Swedish Rhapsody; Debussy: Habenera; Joaquin Rodrigo: Concierto D'Aranjuez; Beethoven: Minuet in G; Khachaturian: Sabre Dance; Time: 44:56; Released. 1999. Label: Danwell Records (1019-2) 7785 Skyhill Drive Los Angeles, CA. 90068 Phone: 888 355-6665; (323) 969-9934

Larry Adler Salutes Gershwin & Other Greats



Scott Joplin: The Entertainer; Gershwin Medley: Summertime, It Ain't Necessarily So, Bess, You Is My Woman Now, There's a Boat Dat's Leaving Soon For New York, ¾ Blues; Larry Adler: Genevieve; Gershwin: I Got Rhythm; Massenet: Meditation; Gettysburg Address (Battle Hymn of the Republic); Screws Blues; Gershwin: Lullaby, Embraceable You; Larry Adler: High Wind In Jamaica; Gershwin: Summertime (Reprise); Rhapsody In Blue. Time: 51:13; Released, 1999. Label:: Danwell Records (1018-2).

Larry Adler is the dean of concert mouth-organists. Born in 1914, he studied piano as a child, but was expelled at the age of twelve from the prestigious Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore for playing *Yes, We Have No Bananas* instead of a waltz at a piano recital. Two years later, Adler realized his life's work when he won the first prize silver cup in a harmonica contest sponsored by the Baltimore Sun newspaper. He has been playing ever since. (I heard him perform live in concert—at the age of 83—with the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops in 1997).

Early in his career he showed his preference for the classics, which were appreciated by high society. Instead of *Turkey in the Straw* or *St. Louis Blues*, Adler played pieces such as the *Vivaldi Violin Concerto*, Bach's *A Minor Violin Concerto*, Marcello's *Oboe Concerto*, short pieces by Fritz Kreisler and Albeniz, as well as the *Rhapsody in Blue* and the great standards by songwriters George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and Richard Rodgers. In the 1950s, classical composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Darius Milhaud wrote original works for Adler.

Although there are no original works for harmonica on these CDs, with the possible exception of the two selections from the

British movies *Genevieve* and *High Wind In Jamaica*, which were composed by Adler himself, the program offers an exciting selection of transcriptions. Adler is accompanied on some numbers by piano and on others by full symphony orchestra or dance band. I cannot praise the musicianship highly enough. Adler exhibits an effortless virtuosity on the mouth organ; his arrangements span the full range of his four-octave instrument and show off his ability to perform two-part counterpoint. Beethoven's *Minuet in G* is unaccompanied. Adler's transcription needs no accompaniment; his double-stop counterpoint provides its own harmonic background.

Some of the pieces are introduced with a spoken monologue by Adler, presumably recorded from some of his live performances. (During the solo *Minuet* I could hear audience noises.) I believe a great part of Adler's success was his charming personality; he could be very funny at times. I especially enjoyed Adler's spoken introduction to Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*: "When I was about sixteen years old, Paul Whiteman played on the bill at the Roxy Theater with his own film, *The King of Jazz*, and I used to hang around outside the stage door and no matter who came in or out, I'd blow the mouth organ at them, thinking I might get a job. "So one day the great jazz saxophonist Frankie Trumbauer heard me play and he took me into Whiteman's dressing room and said, 'Paul, listen to this kid.' I played *The Poet and Peasant Overture*. When I finished, Whiteman said, 'Play *Rhapsody In Blue*.' Well, I was sixteen and I couldn't play *Rhapsody In Blue*, but

neither could I admit it. So I said, 'I don't like *Rhapsody In Blue*.' Whiteman turned to a young man sitting in the room and said, 'What do you think of that, Gershwin? He doesn't like *Rhapsody In Blue*!'"

My favorite tracks, of course, were the pieces from the top-forty classical hit parade with orchestral accompaniment: Debussy's *Claire de Lune*, De Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance* and Khatchaturian's *Sabre Dance* were performed with expertise, fire and aplomb. On the other hand I thought Ravel's *Bolero* was for the most part boring, but my ears perked up slightly during the section toward the end when the piano played the melody and Adler doubled two octaves and a major third higher.

On the Gershwin CD, I especially enjoyed Scott Joplin's *Entertainer*, for mouth organ and pizzicato string orchestra: a superb arrangement. The Gershwin medley for harmonica and piano was also memorable due to the beautiful and sensitive duet playing.

These two CDs by Danwell Records are re-mastered recordings of previously released Adler LPs, some which were recorded live. The sound is amazingly clear and free from scratches and hiss, which one would expect on recordings which are several decades old. The engineers deserve commendation for their fine work. Although the performances and mastering are superb, the CD booklet could be more complete. But that's a minor inconvenience; these albums will be treasured by aficionados of the classical harmonica and I personally am thrilled to have them.

Guido Deiro Follow-up

Dear Guido, I used your article *Who Was First: Solved* in the July issue of BAAC PAGE. Thank you for sending it; I enjoyed it and it's good information for everyone to have. I think it's great what you're doing for your dad. For some reason—at least among the old timers in the club—Pietro is more familiar to them, perhaps because of your dad's early and untimely death. One man I talked to vaguely remembered when "the Deiro Brothers played at the Pezzolo Brothers picnics in Fairfax in the 30's," etc. So, your corrections are long overdue & I'm glad to print them. We have to keep alive our rich and wonderful heritage. Keep up the good work. At least one problem: who was first *where*—is laid to rest. Sincerely, Paul.

Caro Amico Paul: Thank you for using my remarks. I sure hope your readers enjoyed going over this "new information." You are absolutely correct in your assumption that it was the untimely demise of my father that created the distortion in the reporting regarding the introduction and popularization of the piano accordion in this country. My father's career effectively ended with the depression, he lost nearly his entire net worth in a week! The depression also killed Vaudeville and the record industry, the two most important income sources for my father. He never recovered mentally, emotionally or financially. He was not a good businessman, like his brother, Pietro. Pietro had already seen the handwriting on the wall and knew that New York and the publishing business would be his salvation. His career flourished after the depression and the myths that

changed the perceived history of the accordion were created.

Yes, the brothers appeared several times at accordion club picnics in the Bay area and father settled in San Francisco with my mother and I and at the time, as the accordion was still quite popular, he had a string of studios and salesrooms throughout the West. They never were a commercial success, his marriage failed and he lived out the remaining few years of his life in obscurity in Los Angeles. I have a number of photos of my father and the Pezzolo Brothers at the Fairfax picnics. Also, quite a bit of promotional material advertising Accordion Contests and Picnics in the Bay Area. My uncle, Pietro, by that time had gone on to New York and fame and fortune.

While in Los Angeles, my father was asked to assemble and conduct the largest accordion band in history to celebrate the California Festival of Music in 1941. It was a patriotic event held in the Los Angeles Coliseum. He ended up with 1500 accordions! We have the advertising and favorable reviews from the *Los Angeles Times*. So, Ripley's *Believe It or Not* is going to have to change their statement that the world's largest accordion band was 1000 pieces. We have sent them the proofs for their consideration.

The originals of the Bay Area material regarding the accordion are also in the *Deiro Archives* at City University of New York's *Institute for the Free Reed Instrument*. Best regards and thank you, Guido Deiro Jr.

Playing in ensemble is a rewarding challenge to any musician (ask any of those who play in Joe Smiell's, Sharon Walter's or Richard Yaus's ensembles): the hard work more than repays you with fantastic arrangements that a single performer can never hope to emulate. Hopefully, your curiosity has been piqued enough to encourage you to try your hand at ensemble playing. The September meeting will allow you that opportunity under the able baton of Joe Smiell.

Accordion Craftsman Has Had Lifetime of Music-making

Rona Marech, Chronicle Staff Writer

Friday, August 10, 2001

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In the accordion's halcyon days in the United States, which lasted most of the first half of the 20th century, a schoolboy couldn't walk through North Beach without hearing the sweet and sometimes



bumptious sounds of the squeezebox swirling out of open windows and rippling onto the street. Schoolchildren yearned to master the shiny, portable instrument and hundreds of men learned the exacting art of accordion building and repairing from master craftsman who usually hailed from Italy. When the factories closed and the instrument fell on hard times, the ranks of accordion craftsman thinned to almost nothing. Now, only

one factory-trained aficionado with the skills to build accordions from scratch remains in the greater Bay Area.

Vincent Cirelli, the 80-year-old son of Italian immigrants, still works part time in his Brisbane workshop amid small tools, dusty sheet music, pots of wax and dozens of accordions in various stages of disrepair. In his long, blue apron, he still tunes and fixes instruments the old-fashioned way—eschewing electric equipment in favor of hand tools.

And when the spirit hits him, he saunters over to his black, rhinestone-studded Petosa Millennium squeezebox, relaxes his face so that the creases grow smoother and runs his fingers over the familiar keys and buttons. Big Band-era American standards and old Italian tunes fill the workshop. "I have to start from the beginning of time," Cirelli began on a recent afternoon, his gray-white hair brushed back with a decisive swoop. Back in 1929, when Russian Hill still had orchards, 9-year-old Cirelli first heard the sounds of an accordion seeping out of a window across the street from his North Beach home. He was transfixed. "That was the beginning," he said.

His father rented an accordion for \$5 a month, and the young Cirelli began studying with a teacher from Milan. By age 12, he was playing Italian-style standards at parties and sing-alongs, and working as a shop boy at the Columbo & Sons accordion factory. Curious and eager, he peppered the workmen with questions and began to dream of building his own accordion—with pearly keys and his name across the front. He began work on that first model

while still in high school, but in 1941, World War II intervened. "I asked my folks to hold onto it, and when I got back I would finish it," he said. "And I did."

After a four-year stint in the U.S. Coast Guard, he took his one-of-a-kind Cirelli Accordion (140 bass buttons, 43 piano keys, roughly 2,000 parts) and spent a couple of years playing around the country on a "train tour" sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. He returned to San Francisco in 1946 and opened Cirelli Accordion Service, which has been building, servicing, repairing and selling accordions ever since.

"To be honest, I wouldn't let another repairman in the area touch my accordion," said Peter Damante of San Mateo, who has known Cirelli since 1949. "You can give Vince Cirelli blocks of wood, and he'll build an accordion from scratch for you."

He's only done that seven times, however. As a solo craftsman, it was impossible to compete with the big accordion manufacturers, said Cirelli, who last built an entire accordion in 1948. He still has several decades-old, semi-finished, homemade instruments that he plans to complete—"when," he says with a sigh, "I get the time to do it."

But he has slowed down after a heart attack last year. And if he doesn't turn those wooden half-keyboards into accordions, no one will. Cirelli has passed on some of his accordion know-how to his adult son and to Berkeley repairman Kimric Smythe. But his formula isn't written down, "It's all mental. It will die when I die," he said.

The two known remaining Cirelli accordions are still very much alive, however. One was returned to Cirelli when the owner died. The other was stolen from his home a quarter-century ago. Then a couple of years ago, a friend spotted the stolen Cirelli accordion in the window of a San Bruno music shop. He passed the word along and eventually another friend purchased the instrument and returned it to Cirelli. "Now I won't let it out of my sight," Cirelli said. He has willed the accordion to his son.

During the lean years, when the accordion was considered passé, Cirelli had to teach guitar to make a living. But a comeback is afoot, he said, and it couldn't happen to a more deserving instrument.

"I'm happy to see this beautiful instrument didn't die on the grapevine," he said. "I think it will be here forever."

Pulitzer Prize Composer On The Accordion

(From The Classical Free Reed Website)

American concert accordionist Henry Doktorski performed at the Drinko Recital Hall in Cleveland State University's Music and Communication Building, Cleveland, Ohio with the Cleveland Chamber Symphony on September 24th. The group performed *Vintage Alice* by the American Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Del Tredici. The 28-minute work, scored for orchestra and a folk group consisting of two saxophones, mandolin, banjo and accordion, is based on a text drawn from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

The composer spoke about the accordion in his *oeuvre*: "When I began writing my musical setting of *Alice In Wonderland* for orchestra, I wanted to include a second group of instruments which would sound completely different from a symphony orchestra; something totally un-orchestral. After some consideration, I decided that the saxophone, mandolin, banjo and accor-

dion would be perfect because those instruments—due to their cultural identity and distinctive tonal qualities—were rarely used with symphony orchestras. Believe it or not, I actually love the accordion; to me at least, it always sounds funky in an orchestral setting. Its sound is quite unique. In my *Alice* pieces, I write for the accordion as a solo instrument and never try to blend it with the other instruments. Early in my composing career I wrote mostly atonal works. But when I discovered the accordion I developed a desire to use its left-hand chord buttons—the major, minor, seventh and diminished buttons—in my *Alice In Wonderland* piece. This was a turning point for me: it caused me to consider using tonality in my compositions. I suppose for this then, I am indebted to the accordion for opening my eyes to the possibilities of tonality."

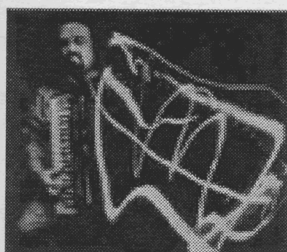
What Constitutes a Classical Accordionist In America

©By William Schimmel, DMA

Dr. William Schimmel earned his doctorate of Music from Julliard. He's a composer, author, lecturer, philosopher and virtuoso accordionist; he performs in a wide variety of styles from classical to pop and has appeared with many major symphony orchestras and recorded with such noted performers as Sting and Tom Waits, who said, "Bill Schimmel doesn't play the accordion, he is an accordion." As an authority on Kurt Weill, Dr. Schimmel has recorded all of Weill's music with the accordion. He is a prolific composer from the concert stage to Broadway theater and is founder of the renowned Tango Project. In 1992 he was named "Best Accordionist" by Keyboard Magazine and recognized as the figure who has done the most to elevate the accordion's sometimes denigrated image.

Walk into any GAP and you will see classic jeans, classic T-shirts, classic Kakais—classics?! It's a funny word today. It's overused—all the more reason to constantly check it and re-define it.

I consider myself to be a classical accordionist simply because the more I study about the past the more I continue to learn. The



more I learn, the more I have to teach to my students. I also enjoy my American identity. Not nationalistic by any shape, but truly catholic and diverse in its tastes. We're noted worldwide for our "pop" culture and this includes the accordion. I enjoy recalling the delight on Sofia Gubaidulina's face as I played my piano accordion (with quint con-

verter) version of her *De Profundis*. I did it in gothic horror movie style. She loved it. She also took delight in the fact that mine was the very accordion that backed up Tom Waits and other rock stars.

Alexander Schurbin begged me to do his *Sonata No. 2* as "performance art!" I only had a few days to learn it so I asked him could I work the page turns into the performance? He said "Please! Please!" At the performance he sat behind me on stage—part cheerleader, part nemesis—performance art!

I consider myself a missionary as well as a mercenary: a missionary due to the fact that I have something wonderful to share; a mercenary because I get paid to do it. At present, I have no university affiliations except as a guest. I'm entirely freelance; even my school *The Institute for Private Studies* operates entirely on its own—no grants, no funding, etc. As a missionary/mercenary, I'm sometimes paid to win someone else's war, which I do because that's what I'm paid for. I sometimes have to put my own ideas on hold in order to do this well. I think this is part of the North American psyche—a part of it. In many cases I work for someone who's recent new work is an extension of something I single-handedly started many years ago. I watch them gather much more aplomb than I could have ever dreamed up for myself. The payoff for me is that I usually end up with a fresh new angle that I take with me as I go back to my own work. This is a way of improving my art.

A number of European artists have come to me for training and coaching. They come to get "loosened up." I also learn from their training and I use it to "tighten up" my students who need that extra polish. This is a way of learning from everything.

What's classical about all of this? It takes a lot of training to be a second or third banana. I think it's easier to be a first banana. It's a strange paradox. I've accepted a kind of limitation and in this limitation new frontiers open up to me all the time. And I have to be well-trained and ready to meet these challenges.

I like to think that my accordion work is about the accordion rather than around the accordion. It's not much about me anymore. My own compositions (realities) explore other works. My recent accordio-shinto work explores our American accordion ancestors such as the Deiros, Frosini, Ettore, Contino, Palmer, Pino and yes, Lawrence Welk. I've explored the tango as classical music. With the *Tango Project* we ushered in a whole new era of neglected art such as tango, palm court, semi-classics and danceable modernism and post-modernism.

Leadership can sometimes take the form of a "back-seat driver" that functions much like Jiminy Cricket did for Pinocchio—a conscience. In my messy/vital/American/democratic/diverse way, I work for the accordion and its continuing evolution. I stumble, I fall, I succeed, but I continue to learn.

Accordion Orchestra in NZ

By Christine Adams



The Akkordeon Landesjugendorchester Baden-Wurttemberg (Germany) completed a successful tour of New Zealand last week with standing ovations at every concert. The orchestra was treated to an official Maori

welcome in Hamilton, before playing their first concert in New Zealand. This was followed by two workshops in Taupo to over 800 school children.

The orchestra then performed another popular concert that evening before heading to Wellington the next day to perform at Old St Paul's, a magnificent historic cathedral. The audience was so impressed they demanded a number of encores and gave several standing ovations.

In Christchurch, the German orchestra shared their concert



with the Christchurch Accordion Orchestra and a local organist. The final concert of the tour was held in Birkenhead, Auckland on August 10th. Initial performances were given by four accordion orchestras from the North Shore area,

followed by the visitors. Altogether, over 2,000 New Zealanders were treated to an exciting concert program by the ALJO, which included *Irish Suite* (Seiber), *Hungarian Rhapsody No 2* (Liszt) and the *Overture to Die Diebische Elster* (Rossini).

Gorby's Latest Squeeze Play

By Holda Paoletti-Kampf



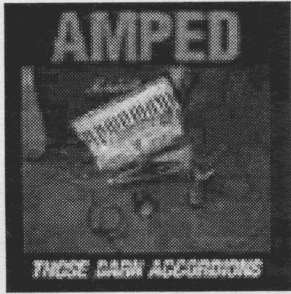
During a recent visit to the Marche region to present the Earth Charter, Mikhail Gorbachev, former leader of the Soviet Union, Nobel peace prize recipient and current president of Green Cross (a non-governmental organization for the support of the poor), visited the town of Loreto. On this occasion the town of

Castelfidardo, represented by Deputy Mayor Mirco Soprani, presented him with its new tourist guide and with an accordion. Needless to say, Mr. Gorbachev appreciated the gift. "I will put it in my private study, it's just beautiful," he said upon receiving the accordion.

Those Darn Accordions

Review by Henry Doktorski

Those Darn Accordions: Paul Rogers, accordion, lead vocals; Suzanne Garramone, accordion, vocals; Patty Brady, accordion, vocals; Lewis Wallace, bass guitar; Bill Schwartz, drums, vocals.



Amped: *Serious World; Mr. Slagle's Revenge; Magic Carpet Ride; Enter the Douse; Making Our Dreams Come True; Meaning of Life.* Time: 17:25.

Clownhead: *They Came for Accordions; Hippie with a Banjo; Wail of Gum; Low Rider; Mucho De Nada; Lapis Lazuli; Love and Lies; First Bratwurst of Summer (vocal by Clyde Forsman); Uncontrollable Urge; Kick My Butt; I Think About Stuff; Clownhead; Dude.* Time: 45:47. [Releases 2001 & 2000, respectfully; Globe Records.]



When I heard *Those Darn Accordions*, the San Francisco based accordion rock ensemble, was coming to Pittsburgh, I said to my new bride, "Any accordion group that can get an article in *Newsweek* and *Time* about "Accordion Raids"; i.e., charging into

swank restaurants and belting out a polka and running out before the management could kick them out—is okay in my book."

Parenthetically, I did something similar for several years in the mid-1980s, so maybe I was nostalgic. Anyway, Mary Kay and I delayed our honeymoon one day and went to see them. They were playing in a small club in the trendy South Side on Carson Street: *Club Cafe*. We settled in and ordered a couple drinks. When the group came onstage after a hurtful warm-up singer there were 20 people in the audience, half of them seemed elderly. Then again, Mary Kay and I are in our mid-40s, so I guess we could be considered youthfully challenged. What was it like? I cannot express it better than the publicity blurb on their website: thosedarnaccordions.com.

"San Francisco's accordion-fueled rock 'n' roll band pumps out quirky, catchy originals chronicling life in the weird lane. The five-piece group promises to forever rearrange your understanding of the accordion. Behind a wall of wheeze, drummer Bill Schwartz and bass player Lewis Wallace provide a firm foundation upon which the manic accordionists layer slabs of sonic mayhem. With distortion boxes cranked to 11, this one-of-a-kind band blazes through a variety of musical genres and timeless classic rock tunes. You won't believe your ears."

Um-hmm. Well, we had fun. The group was entertaining. The bass player and drummer were excellent. Tight. I enjoyed listening to them. The accordions? To be frank, we couldn't hear them much, since the bass, drums and lead singer were the dominant sounds. Maybe it was planned that way.

The two girls on backup accordions seemed to be there because they were cute. Of course there's nothing wrong with sex appeal. Hot babes do wonders for a group's ratings. Were they musicians? We spoke with one member of the group who said she was a pianist and had just learned the accordion recently when there was an opening in the group. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining! She was definitely good to look at.

Lead singer/accordionist Paul Roger did his best pretending to be sometimes Elvis Presley and sometimes Jimi Hendrix with modest success. Musically speaking, I wished he and the girls played MIDI accordions, because then they could have gotten the sound levels high enough to balance the bass, drums and voice

without annoying feedback. Sometimes Paul would go into a searing accordion solo, kneeling down, fingers flying all over the keys, but we actually couldn't hear what he was playing. Not that we cared all that much. The original material didn't get me excited.

The people in the club numbered perhaps 40 when *TDA!* performed the climax of their one hour set: *Magic Carpet Ride*, the sixties hit by Steppenwolf. The club began rocking and a few couples even began dancing. This was music! Mary Kay and I even started to sing along, after a few drinks of course. Another hit by The Who brought back fond memories of my teenage years *perdu*. When *TDA!* finished, we were glad we had come. We had a good time and I think you will also, if you like rock music with a twist of accordion. As for the CDs? They seemed boring compared to the live show. But if you can't see them live, the CDs would be your only alternative. Anyway, when *TDA!* comes to your town, go and give a listen!

Clownhead is the San Francisco-based band's latest recording and explores the sonic possibilities of the accordion. It features musical styles from traditional polkas to hard rock offering listeners original rock songs about aliens (*They Came for Accordions*), couch-potato therapy (*Kick My Butt*), bluegrass nightmares (*Hippie With a Banjo*) and a comment on the disaster that transpired in San Luis Obispo's famed Bubble Gum Alley (*Wall of Gum*). Polka fans can enjoy a Tex-Mex tale of torment (*Mucho De Nada*) and bounce to a BBQ blast featuring rollicking vocals by **that 84-year-old tattooed crooner, Clyde Forsman** (*First Bratwurst of Summer*). The *TDA!* tradition, i.e., the accordion enhancement of classic rock songs, continues with renditions of War's *Low Rider* and Devo's *Uncontrollable Urge*.

Amped the new CD captures the band's squeezebox-fueled sonic assault in all it's glory. The band pumps out four catchy songs chronicling life in the weird lane (see above), including the Steppenwolf rock anthem *Magic Carpet Ride* and a raucous version of *Making Our Dreams Come True*, better known as the theme from *Laverne & Shirley*.

Dear Editor: I'm responding to comments that appeared in the July's BAAC PAGE by Dominic Palmisano. The Bay Area Accordion Club has never shunned any group or individual musician. We have always promoted any accordionist who plays for us or performs for the public. In addition we promote many groups on our website, free. I called two original members of *Those Darn Accordions* and both agreed that BAAC always promoted them whenever they requested and were not aware of being shunned.

In regard to our fat bank account: our savings account, not a CD, has always been in excess of \$5,000; the directors have used extreme caution in maintaining this amount as a safety factor. When annual membership dues start coming in September each year, our bank account swells to over \$11,000. Our fixed expenses are approximately \$6,500. The major portion is used for printing, paper, postage and editing of BAAC PAGE. Our insurance costs \$1,700. In addition we rent Moose Hall in Colma for rehearsing the fun band and ACE group at a cost of \$75 a month for at least nine months, or \$675. Our website costs \$10 a month, or \$120 and our storage locker costs \$240 a year. The meeting hall rent is off-set by attendance fees and is therefore a variable expense that can represent at different times a profit or a debit. In general we've done very well. I sincerely hope you don't think we exist only for a fat bank account because we don't. Lou H. Soper, President, BAAC

President's Message

By Lou H. Soper

What a super show we had this month at Patio Español. If you missed it, I feel sorry for you; the program was just plain awesome. **Tony Lovello** and the San Francisco



Cabletones will be presenting an outstanding musical treat for you on **Thursday, August 23** at the Moose Club in Colma starting at 7 P.M. The cost is \$10. If you need any information please call me at 510-841-6745. If you're going to the **Cotati Festival** on August 25-26, please contact me or any of our BAAC officers and purchase your tickets from us; the club will get \$2 for a one day ticket and \$3 for a two day ticket.

My term as president will end on September 30 and our incoming president, Val Kieser will represent BAAC starting on October 1. We are planning an Installation Dinner for Friday, November 2. More details will follow.

That's all for now; I will be looking forward to seeing you at Moose Hall (23rd) for the Lovello/BAAC workshop & at the Cotati Fest (25th & 26th).

Joe Soprani/Watson & Corelli's Mandolin

By Joanne McDonald



Accordionist Joe Soprani recently performed for over 3,000 people in the *Russell Watson Concert* at Trump's Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. Soprani made a special appearance with England's most famous tenor, Russell Watson, in his USA debut; Joe played *Pelagia's Song* from the movie *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (to be released August 17th). Also, on the program were

special guests: recording star & entertainer Natalie Cole and Lea Salonga, star of *Miss Saigon*. The concert was taped for Public Television at the Taj Mahal, and will be shown throughout the United States. The program is called *Russell Watson—The Voice*. Russell Watson will also appear on *Good Morning America* in New York on August 17th and has invited Joe Soprani to join him in a repeat performance of *Pelagia's Song*. The arrangement features accordion, guitar and two mandolins.

ACR Summer Fun Picnic

Sept. 22nd, Penngrove Community Park.
Adults: \$10.00 Kids 12 & under: \$5.00. Music & Food! 10-5pm; Meals 12-2pm. Call (707) 935-7334.

From Hiway 101 take Old Redwood Hwy/ Penngrove Exit. Go East towards Penngrove for 1 & 1/2 miles. Turn right at Main St (stoplight) & follow ACR Picnic signs to Community Park Picnic Grounds behind the Firehouse.

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CALENDAR

Bay Area Accordion Club:
1st. Wed. 7:30 pm. Patio Español,
2850 Alemany
San Francisco. 510.792.8765
http://www.baaccordionclub.org

East Bay Accordion Circle:
2nd Thurs. 7:30pm. NEW LOCATION!!!
1540 Scenic, Berkeley. Bring Your Accordion!

Info: (510) 548-2822

ACR Fun Band Practice:
2nd Mon. 7-9pm. McDowell
Elementary School.
421 South McDowell Blvd.
Petaluma. Info: Gwyn Lister
(415) 924-3202

Golden St. Accordion Club:
2nd Tues. Pietro's #2. 679 Merchant.
Vacaville. Info: (707) 864-2359

Good Time Accordion Club:
2nd Weds. Community Center. 7:00pm.
1055 Escalon Ave.
Escalon, CA. Info: (209) 545-3603

ACR General Meeting:
3RD Mon. 7:30pm
Herman Sons Hall. 860 Western. Petaluma.
Info. contact Harry Cannata (707) 838-2859

South Bay Jam
1st Sunday 2PM.
7th Day Adventist Church
off Camden and Kooser.

BAAC Ensemble
2nd & 4th Weds 7pm.
Moose Lodge, Daly City.
Call Frank Montoro (650) 574-4757 confirm.

BAAC "Fun Band"
3rd Weds 7pm.
Moose Lodge Daly City.
Call Val Kieser (510) 531-4836 to confirm.

**Internat'l Accordion
Convention @ Las Vegas**
October 14 to 18th. The Accordion
Event of a Lifetime

**BAAC & Lovello hits
Moose Hall Aug. 23rd!**

**The Cotati Fest runs
Aug. 25th & 26th!**

BAAC PAGE Editing & Layout Paul Allan Magistretti

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