

BAY AREA ACCORDION CLUB

December General Meeting

by Bob Berta

The December general meeting was opened by President **Frank Montoro** who welcomed the many visitors both young and old. Rumor was that someone special would be visiting us from the North Pole, so a large contingent of children and grandchildren showed up in anticipation. The meeting provided a real smorgasboard of entertainment. We also had two great guest artists who were warmly received by the members.

MC Domenic Saso introduced past president **Lou Soper** who started the festivities with a collection of popular songs that he played and sang.

Next up was our resident button box expert, arranger and band leader extraordinaire, **Joe Smiell**. **Joe** played a selection of Austrian and German melodies on his gorgeous button box. **Joe** told us a story about music he heard as a child played in the coal mining area of Western Pennsylvania. He described some musical memories of that time, then he demonstrated what he remembered with a beautifully played piece of many moods. The audience showed its appreciation of **Joe's** artistry with loud and long applause.

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Message To All Members

from your Board of Directors

We are changing the way we handle your name tags, or badges, so please listen up. The fellows at the door are spending far too much time and energy putting out and alphabetizing name tags, helping people find theirs, discussing where lost tags might be, etc., etc. We want the name tags used, but we need to find a way to make them less of an issue.

Therefore, beginning immediately, we will ask each member to be responsible for his/her own name tag. Wear it home, then bring it with you to the next meeting. Or, keep it in your pocket for a month. We will not collect and display your tag each month. If you *forget* your tag, you may use a one-time paper name tag (which will be available at the door). If you *lose* your name tag and need another, we will charge you \$2.00 for a replacement.



CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT: Your Board believes it is time to create a gorgeous BAAC t-shirt (and perhaps a cap). To do so, we need a design, which would most likely include both a logo (words) and a graphic. We would like that

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

January 2, 1995, BAAC January General Meeting Featuring Bob Delgado, Joe Nanut, Rob Campanella, Frank Montoro, Frank Panacci. Donworth Hall, 22nd & Eucalyptus, San Francisco, 7:00 P.M..

January 4th, Wednesday. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM. Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests are welcome. (415) 589-8409.

January 9th, 1995, Monday. Fun Band Rehearsal, 7:00 PM. House of Parties, Daly City. Call the director, Domenic Saso, at (415) 587-7557.

January 11th, Wednesday. BAAC Accordion Ensemble Rehearsal, House of Parties. Also January 25th.

February 6th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting, 7:00 PM. Featuring Jim Ragel with Marvin Thompson on clarinet, Jim Firpo & Leon Broussal, and Bart Beninco. Donworth Hall, San Francisco.

March 5th, 1995, Sunday afternoon. Veikko Ahvenainen concert, Mercy High School, San Francisco.

December General Meeting, cont.

Our first guest artist was next. **Pam Bishop** is from England. You may



Joe Smiell

and noise going on, Santa had to make a special visit to see what all the excitement was about. Of course, all the children and grandchildren were ecstatic with the arrival and his bag of candy canes. A couple of large cakes were also on hand for those members with a sweet tooth. My youngest daughter had a chance to see Santa for the first time, having just missed him last year (she was born Dec 27th '93). She treasured the candy cane that Santa gave her so much that I had a difficult time removing it from her grasp when it became bed-time!

those difficult pieces look easy, and after much applause played a fantastic encore



Pam Bishop

recall from our Internet article last month that three Club members found **Pam** through the Internet, when she posted a notice of her intention to visit the Bay Area at the end of November. When we all asked her to visit, she graciously accepted immediately and agreed to play her instrument, a Duet Concertina by Wheatstone. She played a selection of Irish and French tunes which were perfectly suited to the concertina. The crowd responded enthusiastically to this very emphatically non-Italian accordion playing, and many members crowded around to speak with **Pam** at the break. We can be confident that **Pam** will have a warm feeling for the reception she received from BAAC.

Lou Soper again took the stage to lead the music that everyone was waiting for....his annual Christmas sing-a-long. With all the good cheer

After the break **John Molinari** played a selection of Frosini pieces, "Fantasy" and another whose title we missed. **John** made



Lou Soper

of a medley of tunes from Fiddler on the Roof. I wished that **John** could have kept on playing. His incredible musical ability is very addictive for his audience. Hopefully we can get **John** back in the near future.

Peter Di Bono introduced another visitor, **Guy Klucevsek**, the well-known, young, New York based "alternative music" accordionist. **Peter** had first heard him play on channel 9 TV and went through a lot of work to find him (in Marin County) and invite him to this meeting. **Guy** is sending us some biographical material which will appear in the January newsletter, but we can tell you that he plays unusual music, written either by or for himself, drawing from a variety of ethnic styles, but resulting in compositions only vaguely related to their roots. He played three delightful and entertaining pieces

which were met with both loud laughter

Dec. General Meeting, cont.

and much applause. They were titled "Samba D' Hiccup" (written by himself),

meeting. (Note from your Editor), Tower Records carries his CD's in their classical area under "accordion." Don't miss hearing what this man can do!

Ed Massolo, Joe Smiell, and our resident MC **Domenic** for the outstanding work



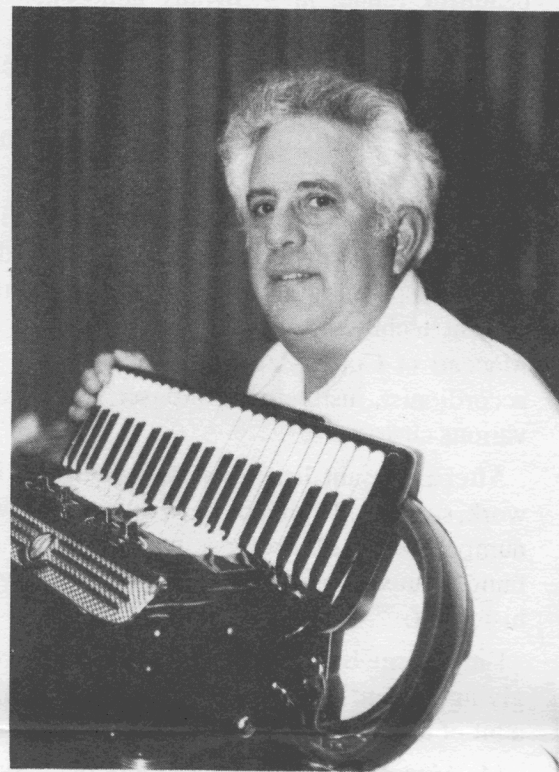
Guy Klucevsek

"Some of That Old Time Soul Polka," and the "Disinformation Polka." What a wonderful treat he was! He has several CD's available, some of which he sold at the

Last on the program was the **San Francisco Accordion Ensemble** led by **Joe Smiell**. They played Strauss' "Thunder & Lightning Polka," Frosini's "Olive Blossoms," Rossini's "Italian in Algiers Overture," "Sarabande," "Gavotte," Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride," and "Polka" composed by Joe. All the numbers were arranged by **Joe Smiell**. Members of the Ensemble are **Jerry Kramer, Peter Di Bono, Bart Beninco, John Molinari, Marian Kelly, Don Nurisso, Ron Borelli, and Joseph E. Smiell**. The group sounded fantastic! All of

the members are accomplished musicians, and **Joe** has refined the group's playing to a level that is without peer.

In closing, I want to thank **Frank Panacci**,



John Molinari

they have done on the entertainment committee this past year. You can make their job easier by volunteering to play at a meeting in 1995.



The San Francisco Accordion Ensemble

Impressions

by Eino Huhtala

To attend the Gordon Piatanesi Testamomial Dinner at a beautiful venue, in a friendly atmosphere filled with good music, camaraderie and laughter was not only an event to cherish, but also a memorable one because it becomes part of the history of the accordion in San Francisco. It is a milestone marking the end of an era of accordion manufacture in the San Francisco Bay Area.

During the course of the evening, my wife introduced me to a charming gentleman whose trade as an accordion repairman has been indispensable to accordionists; but which now, with our current technology, may be endangered. He is Mr. Albert Maccari of Corte Madera, member of BAAC, age 88 years, accordionist, instructor, composer, and arranger of music for various customers.

After a pleasant discussion, he invited us to his home to see his work, study, and momentos. We visited and were amazed at the numbers of awards, trophies, manuscripts, and photos of world-famous musicians which he proudly displays and narrates the history of.

I'm a firm believer that indulgence in reminiscences and giving account of the past is good for the soul, so let's delve into a bit of it.

Mr. Maccari's father immigrated from Italy in 1907, followed by Albert in 1924, who, in the meantime, studied music the old Italian way — all the basics of music were learned and memorized before the instrument was touched. Some accordion repair craftsmanship was handed down via the traditional father-to-son route. He also learned the barber's trade, and (point of interest) remembers that BAAC member Frank Panacci's father was one of his customers.

Mr. Maccari began working for Guerrini and Colombo as a repairman in 1927, and when Colombo changed locations to Columbus Ave, Al went with them.

There followed a period when he formed a partnership with Guido Diero and Jean Idiart in a studio and accordion school. A photo shows 45 accordionists in one group. At a time when business was poor, Guido Diero moved in to live with the Maccaris.

In 1947 he was still working full time at Colombo, then later worked for Elio Taffei and later for Vincente Cirelli, occasionally at Geneva, full time at Brisbane, then he retired in 1970. During our visit, he played tapes of his own music, showed us Jean Idiart's accordion with his name cleverly worked into the front grill panel. Bequeathed to him at Idiart's death, it is his prized possession, not to be parted with.

Another item shown was the master copy of a book entitled "Some Thoughts About the Accordion in San Francisco" by Ron

President's Message

This has been another banner year! There have been so many golden moments for BAAC in 1994, I dare not begin to list them for fear of leaving something or someone out. Looking over the year's monthly editions of our newsletter, I see many familiar names and some new ones who have performed for us at our monthly meetings. But we have yet to hear from quite a few "accordionists-in-hiding". May 1995 be the year they come out of the closet and onto the stage of Donworth Hall.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I want to wish all of you Happy Holidays. May your days ahead be filled with the joyous sounds of music.

Frank Montoro

December Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Treasurer reports \$8274 in the bank accounts.
- Algis is developing a club questionnaire which members will be asked to complete when they join or pay annual dues. He will distribute a few test questionnaires at our Jan. general meeting to check peoples' reactions.
- We want to create new BAAC t-shirts and need a snappy logo and graphic to imprint on them. The Board decided to sponsor a contest for the best logo and graphic and award \$100 to the winning individual. The Board will choose the winner.
- BAAC will promote Veikko Ahvenainen's March 7th concert at Mercy High School in San Francisco.
- We wish to remind members that they receive only one name tag without charge. Should they misplace their tag, we must charge them \$2.00 for a replacement.

Flynn. It is a brief but concise history of famous acordionists going back to the 1890s. Some copies were printed and distributed and may still be in someone's library in this area. Should one be found, let's make it available to the Club. It's a fantastic bit of memorabilia. We found our host keen, alert, and interesting, and still arranging special music for customers.

I thank Mr. and Mrs. Maccari for extending an interview to us and wish them well, and particularly, a speedy recovery for Mrs. Maccari's broken ankle!

Care and Nurturing of your Instrument

by Frank Schlotter

©Attention! You may be doing slow but certain damage to your accordion and don't know it.

Accordions do not improve with age. Why? One causative factor is the presence of moisture. Water is the sworn enemy of houses, dams, accordions and the drinking class, among others.

Q. But I don't play my accordion when I'm showerin', bathin' or swimmin', so what's the fuss?

A. Cold weather is upon us all over Northern California, as usual. Many of us squeezers are taking our accordions out of warm snug homes to gigs, parties, gatherings, lessons, meetings, whatever.

If you transport your melodious squeeze machine in the unheated trunk of your vehicle (at the risk of stating the screaming obvious) your accordion will get cold! When you arrive at your destination where

the air is warm, there will be condensation. The moisture on the outside of the accordion will evaporate as it warms. But inside, Oh Woe! Condensation will cover all of the goodies such as reeds, rods, leathers, wood-joints, pickups et al. Do this frequently and condensate will keep the interior moist constantly.

Q. So OK, now I know. What can I do about it?

A. Carry the box inside the heated part of your vehicle. Don't dawdle too long getting in or out.

If you can't avoid the cold, seal your instrument with a plastic, zippered airtight bag. Bed & Bathroom stores and luggage stores have a variety of sizes. For double insurance, bag the accordion case. At your destination, wait until the accordion comes to room temperature before unzipping the bags.

If you haven't an airtight cover, then use

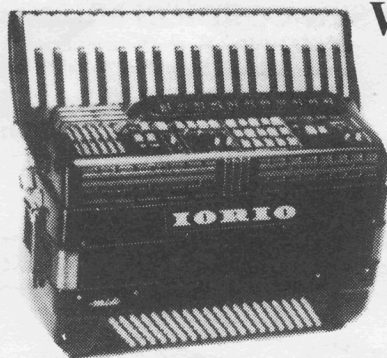
the bellows release and fill the bellows with good warm air from the room. Work the bellows and the keyboard to let warm air flow past the reeds, the mechanicals and the electronics. Do this repeatedly.

Nuf said. Keep those fingers flying. Next time how to polish your instrument.

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"Forever Tango"

by Gene Lovello

Recently, I spoke with Tom Torriglia asking why, on his KGO radio report, he did not mention accordionists playing in the Bay Area. He responded by asking me "Do you know of any?" It seemed a fair question, but it practically ended our conversation. If that were not bad enough, I almost missed "Forever Tango" which is now playing at Theater on the Square in San Francisco. Not only was this musical highly entertaining, but for me, educational also.

Since the age of five, I've had my nose stuck in the piano accordion and found little interest in any of its "family." Yes, I had seen button boxes but beyond simple curiosity, believed they fell too deeply into some ethnic category of music for my taste. Only recently at a club meeting did a new word come to me: "bandoneón." Bandoneón? What is a bandoneón? I was unable to find the word in the dictionary, but when the curtain went up on Forever Tango, I no longer needed a dictionary, for the program opens with a highly intense and expressive solo on the bandoneón by an artist seated in a single spotlight. Only then did I suddenly realize that there were THREE more playing, and for me, these four instruments carried the spice and flavor of all the music that followed. I was impressed by the artistry, by the music, by the sheer intensity, and finally

by the extraordinary dance itself.

The strength of tone and projection of the bandoneón (held on the lap of the seated artist) astonished me. What I heard was not the familiar throaty sound I favor of bassoon reeds in my piano accordion, but more like the musette, using double clarinet reeds, one detuned lending the distinctive singing, soaring, "French" sound. Because of its limited 28 note vocal range, the bandoneón falls somewhere between a concertina and a piano accordion, but, unlike the concertina, the bandoneón reeds play as the piano accordion, with the same note playing on the push and the pull. I found the music captivating and irresistible, helped by the incredible bandoneón virtuosity and sheer concentration of Lisandro Androver, also the Musical Director. He was outstanding and received an ovation for a sensitive and passionate performance filled with romance, as did all the other performers. The orchestra also consisted of piano, violas, cello, bass, and keyboard; the dancers were a very talented company of twelve. The music was outstanding, the dance intricate, erotic and sensual, the per-

formance exceptional, and aside from several vocals (which were not well received) and a brief dialog in Spanish, no speaking parts were heard. Beautiful, intense music and dance along with a projected feeling of romance electrified the audience.

In addition to the familiar La Cumparsita and Jealousy, we heard more than 20 other tangos, brilliantly performed by this Argentine orchestra. I also thought that the pianist was flawless, playing with remarkable passion.

(Late flash!) The show has been extended until February 12th, so it's not too late to attend. Siskel and Ebert would give the performance two thumbs up; I give them four gold stars and a rousing "hurrah" as I rush to the music store to buy more TANGO, the music of the people, (as played on the bandoneón, of course.)



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TEACHERS

Message, from p.1

design to come from our members, hence this contest announcement. BAAC will award \$100 to the individual who submits the winning t-shirt design. The Board will consider all submissions and select the winner.

Entries must be original. We will probably prefer a design which requires no more than two colors for its execution, since multi-color art is expensive to screen print. And we will favor something with simple lines and a concept quickly grasped over more complex ideas.

Direct questions or submissions to any Board member or phone our voice mail number (974-9210).

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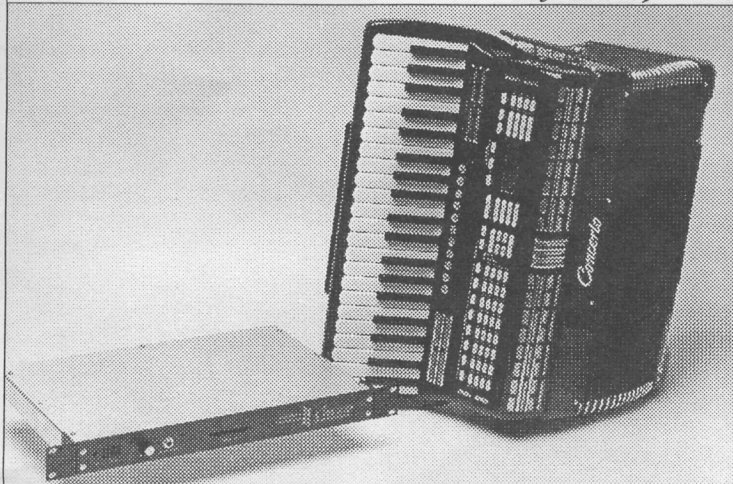
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