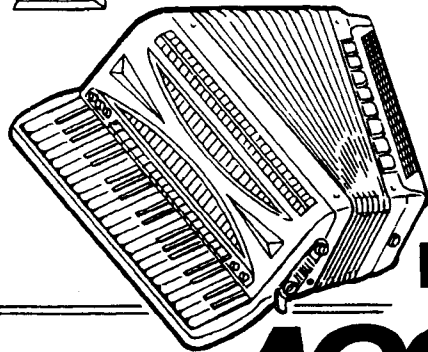


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

December, 1998

President's Message

by Marian Kelly

CHANGES TO GENERAL MEETING DATE and LOCATION...

Please read carefully. See page 5 for directions.

Dear Members and Friends;

Here's the big message for this month: we've made a decision regarding the location of our general meetings. Beginning right away in January, and for the foreseeable future, we'll be holding our monthly general meetings on the first **TUESDAY** of the month at a new location. It's the **Verdi Club**, at **2424 Mariposa in San Francisco**, $\frac{1}{2}$ block from Potrero:

We've tested the Moose Lodge for two months and found it to be too small, both inside and out. Those who attended our December meeting there completed questionnaires for us, and the concensus favored Donworth over Moose by quite a large margin.

However, Donworth has its own set of difficulties in addition to the lack of food and beverage facilities, the sound challenges, and the relatively early hour at which we needed to be out. Our reliable friend, Frank Panacci, has decided that four years opening, setting up, and cleaning up Donworth for and after our meetings is enough, and that it's time for someone else to do it. Three cheers for Frank; he's absolutely right. How many of us have understood just what he was doing every month? Let me share his first-Monday schedule with you. Purchase sodas, coffee, cream etc. sometime before the meeting. Sometimes there's enough money to do this from the prior month's sales...sometimes not. BAAC never spent a penny on that beverage counter. On the day of, at 4:30, pick up Donworth key from their Admin. Office. Five-fifteen, go in and start the coffee, because the pot takes at least an hour. Set up beverage service stuff. Set up chairs (usually with help); put out our stage sign. Then stay around during the meeting to help with soda and coffee service. Afterwards, clean up anything that others haven't cleaned up, take out the trash, lock the doors. Next day return key and check to office. What a commitment that man has made to our Club! I urge each one of you to tell him how much you appreciate his faithfulness in quietly handling that big job every single month.

When we considered moving back to Donworth, the Board recognized rather sadly that replacing Frank would be close to impossible. Meantime, though, Frank and Ed Massolo had suggested the Verdi Club, to which Frank has belonged for many years. Frank had negotiated with the Verdi manager who, wouldn't you know, plays accordion. Apparently enviously well. Your Board checked it out, somewhat hastily but quite thoroughly, and decided that holding our meetings there

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Mark Your Calendars

Jan. 5 (Tuesday). BAAC General Membership Meeting at **Verdi Club in San Francisco**. 2424 Mariposa 7:00 - 9:30pm. Student/Teacher night. Come support the future of the accordion!

Jan. 10 (Sunday). (and every 2nd Sunday). BAAC San Jose meeting. Germania Rest. 261 N. 2nd. St. 3:00pm to ? Bring your accordion!

Jan. 10 (Sunday). Anthony Galla-Rini 95th Birthday party. At the Italian Cultural and Social Center, 1039 North Broadway, Los Angeles, CA. Dinner price \$33 includes full dinner with wine. Send checks and reservations request to Silvia Prior. 2402 Hillrose Place, Oxnard, Ca. 93030-1566. Call 805-983-6163.

Jan. 10 (Sunday). French Musette-Style Accordion workshop with Henri Ducharme. At Boaz Accordions in Oakland. 2:00-4:00pm. \$25. Call for reservations and location...510-653-6983.

Jan. 11 (Monday) (And every second Monday). Accordion Circle of the East Bay Ensemble practice. Beginning and intermediate players. 7:30pm, in West Berkeley at 816 Bancroft. Cost: \$10 per practice. Led by Henri Ducharme, 510-526-3255 or Jean O'Malley, 510-843-9958.

Jan. 12 (Tuesday). (and every second Tuesday). Meeting of the Golden State Accordion-Aires. 7:00pm. Pietro's No.2. 679 Merchant St. Vacaville. Ca.

Jan. 7 (Thursday). (And every 1st. Thursday) Meeting of the Accordion Circle of the East Bay. 7:30pm. 951 Aileen, Oakland. For info call 510-653-

Cont. page 2

Jan. 18. (and every third Monday). Meeting of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods. 7:00pm. Volpi's in Petaluma.

Jan. 27. (Wednesday). 7:30pm. BAAC Board Meeting. Val Kieser's home at 3437 Crane Way, Oakland 510-531-4836. Guests welcome.

Jan. 31. (Sunday). Balkan/Gypsy/Klezmer Music workshop by Nada Lewis. At Boaz Accordions in Oakland. 2:00-4:00pm \$25. Call for reservations and location...510-653-6983.

Febr. 2. (Tuesday). General membership meeting. Verdi Club in San Francisco at 2424 Mariposa The theme is **Ethnic Night**. Joe Smiell band featured. Contact Bob Berta at 510-450-5766 to schedule your ethnic group or performance.

Febr. 7 (Sunday). Free demo of Bugari Model 288 (top of line model) accordion by Lou Jacklich. At Boaz Accordions 2:00-4:00pm. Call for reservations and location...510-653-6983.

Febr. 14 (Sunday). BAAC San Jose meeting. Germania Rest. 261 N. 2nd. St. 3:00pm to ? Bring your accordion!

Febr. 21 (Sunday). Balkan/Gypsy/Klezmer Music with Nada Lewis. At Boaz Accordions 2:00-4:00pm. \$25 Call for reservations and location...510-653-6983.

Febr. 28 (Sunday). Adapt Any Music for Accordion workshop \$25 At Boaz Accordions 2:00-4:00pm. Call for reservations and location...510-653-6983.

March 25 Weekend. Search For Hottest Accordionist Contest. In Branson, Missouri's Lawrence Welk Center. Video entry. Info on WWW.Accordions.com or call 800-505-WELK.

BAAC Ensemble practice first and third Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Colma at 7535 Mission St. from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Frank Montoro (650)574-4757 for additional information.

BAAC Fun Band practice fourth Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Colma at 7535 Mission St. from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Tom Cordoni @ 415-333-5625 for more information.

Beginners Support Groups/Bands

East Bay 510-843-9958

San Francisco 415-673-8835

South Bay 408-258-1258

Please send Calendar Information to your Editor, using the address on the last page.

December General Meeting

by Bob Berta and Herb Meier

The BAAC members once again visited the Colma Moose Lodge for our second meeting at the new trial location. While the meeting was a fun and entertaining meeting, the hall once again proved to be a little too congested and on the warm side in spite of the cool winter night. We will be moving to the **Verdi Club** in San Francisco a starting on the first Tuesday in January. Verdi has a larger facility and snacks will be provided by the club. Liquid "refreshments" are also available.

A good size crowd was on hand in anticipation of some excellent holiday music...and a visit by that famous bearded guy. Prior to the meeting and during intermission, MC Herb Meier did double duty by providing holiday music. Thanks Herb!

First up was the BAAC Ensemble. This group has assembled under the able baton of composer, arranger and conductor, Joe Smiell. Also acting as assistant conductor is Valarie Morris who also performs as part of the Ensemble. Each time this group performs they impress the audience with fine playing and interesting arrangements. This time they opened with Leroy Anderson's *Syncoated Clock*. The group set the tempo with vocal clock "tics" in both the beginning and end. Next the Ensemble performed the *Choral Op. 68* by Schumann. This lovely piece is a slow but very moving piece that taxes the musicality of a musical group. Was this the premier performance by the BAAC Ensemble and Choir? The Ensemble provided a moving rendition which not only reminded the listener of a fine choir but reinforced that image by also singing along with some parts. Many in the audience remarked on the effectiveness of that unique treatment. The final selection was a Waltz by Offenbach. This was performed with a delicate lilt that reminded one of elegant gentlemen and ladies in beautiful gowns dancing in majestic palaces in Europe. Both this group and the fun band remind you that they are always welcoming new members. Information about joining is in the Calendar Column of this newsletter.

Next on stage was the ACE Ensemble. This group consists of some of the same members as the BAAC Ensemble with the same arranger, composer and conductor. But since they are able to meet more often they are able to tackle even more difficult arrangements. They performed a *Christmas Potpourri 1, 2, 3* and *Danish Waltz* as arranged by Joe Smiell. This group never fails to impress us and they have evidently become popular judging from the number of performances they have been giving.

Final ensemble for the night was our BAAC Fun Band. This group performs music of a slightly less demanding, but no less satisfying level than the other two bands. They performed *Chattanooga Choo-Choo*, *Too-Fat Polka*, *Piemontessina* and *La Piccinina*. This group is also looking for new members so if you have that urge to join in, check the end of the Calendar Column in this newsletter for information about how to contact them.

First soloist for the evening was BAAC Newsletter Editor Bob Berta in a special performance of Holiday tunes. Bob performed a medley of his own arrangements of well known Christmas tunes including *What Child is This (Greensleeves)*, *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, *Angels We Have Heard on High*, *We Three Kings of Orient Are* and *O Come All Ye Faithful*. Bob's performance ended with a Nicolai Bach composition, *How Brightly Shines The Morning Star*. This last tune provided an opportunity to show off some fancy bass work as counterpoint to the treble. While Bob was not playing a free bass accordion, he was able to achieve a wide range of bass notes by quick selection of various octaves of bass reeds through the register switches.

The intermission was highlighted with a visit from Santa. Evidently he has decided to get a new "look" this year as his snowy white beard and mustache were missing this year.

After the intermission Frank Lima came on stage in probably the most exotic costume to hit our stages. In previous performances for us he has appeared in his many "alter egos". This includes his stage personae, "Julio Morgani", Morgani's "sister" and his latest incarnation. His accordion was a perfect compliment to the beautiful costume with eye bending graphics and flashy reflectors. WOW, you would have a hard time missing THIS outfit. And of course Frank is not just a flash act without substance. He matches his flash with fine performances of a variety of musical ethnic styles, classic music, opera and pop tunes. This time he delighted us with *The Illusionist* by Rota, Jingle Bells in a REALLY unusual treatment...performed in a minor key and with a distinctly Eastern European bent and a medley of seven "Maria" tunes (*Maria* from Westside Story, *What Will We Do About Maria* (Sound of Music), *O Marie* (Italian), *Marie The Dawn is Breaking*, *Maria Elena* and *Ave Maria*. Frank finished with *Un Bel Di* (Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*) and a Piazzola Tango "Oblivion".

Final "act" of the evening was our third annual Holiday Accordion Jam Fest. All those who brought accordions to the meeting brought them on stage and played a variety of holiday tunes. Those who forgot to bring their accordions were able to join in by singing along with the accordions.

Join your fellow BAAC members at the January meeting for the annual teachers/students night. We expect some incredible performances by tomorrows accordionists. If you are a teacher and have not yet been contacted PLEASE contact Bob Berta at 510-450-5766 to schedule your students.

Contact Phone #s for Officers :

Pres. Marian Kelly (650)854-1896
 Vice Pres. vacant
 Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook (650)591-3009
 Record. Sect. Val Kieser (510)531-4836

To join BAAC send a check for \$25
 (good thru Sept. 30 '99) to:

BAAC
 31 Aliso Way
 Portola Valley, Ca. 94028.

Wanted

I am looking for music for the U.C. Berkeley fight song - "Our Golden Bears"? and Stanford's - "Come Join the Band". Our group plays at convalescent hospitals and these tunes are often requested. If you have the music for these selections, please call Gwyn Lister at (415)924-3202.

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My Momentous Trip to Castelfidardo, Italy

excerpts from a letter by Anthony Galla-Rini

This came about when I was invited by the 23rd PREMIO CONCORSO INTERNAZIONALE (Prize International Contest) of Castelfidardo to be their Guest of Honor for the period of October 7-11.

My commitment was to play two solos, which I did on Thursday evening playing *Ave Maria* (Schubert and the *Aria Vesti La Giubba* from "Pagliacci" (Leoncavallo), I received a good round of applause. The M.C. then presented me with the "Golden Reed" Trophy which I had anticipated. It is impressive but rather large and very heavy. I also received a Diploma of Merit from the Mayor of Castelfidardo. The audience then gave me a big round of applause.

Bio Boccosi, long time friend of mine, came to see me on Saturday morning with another man who had a board which had soft putty on it. He made an imprint of my left hand intended to be put on display at the INTERNATIONAL ACCORDION MUSEUM in Castelfidardo which has over one hundred accordions from sixteen countries on display. In closing, needless to say, I returned home very happy with my trip to Castelfidardo.

Wanted for small student; 80 or 96 bass or small 120 bass accordion. Contact Marian Kelly at 650-854-1896

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 408-734-1565

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had enough positive things going for it to be well worth moving our meeting date to Tuesday.

And so, folks.....it's done. The Bay Area Accordion Club now meets the first **Tuesday** of every month from 7:00 to as late as we wish at the Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa, in San Francisco.

Let me tell you a little about it. The main floor is an entry area, an institutional kitchen, a bar room which holds something like 50, and the main room, not unlike the size of Donworth, with a stage, tables for 10, good acoustics, dimmable lights, and a sound system. Ladies' Room is upstairs; mens' is down. The plan is that some food will be provided at every meeting. It's likely to be cheese, cold cuts, and bread, but we could negotiate other items. Drinks will be available in the bar at very reasonable prices. We will continue to charge \$2 at the door (except for occasional special events); that door fee will go directly to the Club in lieu of a fixed amount of rent. They give parties and serve meals regularly; we will be able to negotiate meals and special events there if we choose. After our regular meeting, you'll be able to stay there and jam or talk if you wish.

You will need to park on the street or on side streets, so we anticipate that you will consider parking a challenge. Quite frankly, though, it seems to me that the Donworth parking was so good as to make anything else look like a challenge. The cross street is Hampshire; when I was there during non-business hours I saw lots of available parking within a block of Verdi. The manager assures me that in the evening, when the business folks go home, parking is relatively easy to find. Several nearby blocks park cars at a 90 degree angle to the buildings, so each block accommodates many cars. We will set up a system whereby you can drop your accordion off at the Verdi door before you park, which should ease any concerns you might have.

Your Board believes that Verdi incorporates the best characteristics from both Donworth and Moose, and we think you'll agree. Come check it out! But don't come on a Monday..... BAAC now meets the first Tuesday of the month!

**BAAC BOARD SYNOPSIS**

- ◆ The Board announces that Kimric Smythe has recently joined our Board. (Other members are Sharon Walters, Peter Adler, Dominic Palmisano, and Gwyn Lister.)
- ◆ The Treasurer reported that both our picnic and our dinner were profitable. They aren't intended to be profit-making activities, but we do try not to lose money on them. Current bank balances (11/30) total \$13,382.
- ◆ John Kieser, Val's husband, has completed his audit of our books. He found a couple small things missing, but in general his report says that Josephine has been doing a fine job of record keeping.
- ◆ The Board adopted a budget for the '98-'99 fiscal year after some discussion. The major increase in amounts allocated was for guest performers; that amount is now \$1500. Several items were decreased from last year.
- ◆ There was considerable discussion of the various meeting location venues. Much of this information is covered elsewhere in this newsletter.
- ◆ The Board agreed to hold events in 1999 as we did in 1998: picnic in September and dinner in October. Our August Cotati Festival booth this year will be much lower key, requiring much less planning, since we won't attempt to use it as a fund raiser.
- ◆ The Membership Committee, headed by Bob Berta, is making good headway on planning our meeting calendar for the year. January is student/teacher night; February is ethnic night; May is ladies' night. They are pursuing several other great possibilities for our other meetings. We'll keep you posted.

ACCORDION TO BOAZ

by Boaz Rubin

I often hear complaints about the sound quality of amplified accordions. The common reflex is to put all the blame on the microphone or microphones, particularly if the accordion is equipped with built-in mics. But the microphones aren't always to blame - they are in fact just one part of a series of components that affect the sound that ultimately comes out of the speaker. Using the appropriate amplification gear and using it well can make a big difference in the sound you get without necessitating major surgery to your accordion. Cables are the cheapest and most simple link in your sound system. Good quality balanced cables combining two hot leads with a ground shield will go a long way towards reducing hums and distortion. A cheap cable, on the other hand, can operate like an antenna picking up interference from everything from the fluorescent lighting to the refrigerator. So don't cheap out on cables. Also, don't coil your cables. Coiled cables are one of the most common preventable causes of sound distortion. If the cable that runs from your accordion to your amplifier is coiled or laid in a heap, it can cause an electromagnetic field effect which can detract from the sound quality. Another frequent mistake in accordion amplification is to use a guitar amplifier. Guitar amplifiers are designed to distort. A keyboard or acoustic amplifier is the only way to go. That said, every amplification system will sound different. The only way to find the system that is most compatible with your microphones and the sound you want is to listen. At a recent sound seminar at Boaz Accordions, accordionists were able to plug into a variety of amps and decide for themselves which they liked best. The small Roland amps proved popular. I liked the Polytone Brute IV myself. A vintage SANO tube accordion amp, one of the best alternatives in its day, could not compete with the more modern amps for clarity and fidelity. Another important tip for good, clean sound is to remember that volume and tone controls collect dirt at either end of their travel. Turning the control all the way up or down may cause crackling. That said, it is usually more effective to turn your accordion's tone control up as much as possible and rely on the amplifier to adjust the tone. This is because the tone control on your accordion is a "passive" tone control which can only filter out high frequencies. And the frequencies it filters out cannot be recovered by the amplifier. A good quality amplifier has "active" tone controls which operate by boosting frequencies. So by relying on the amp's active control to adjust your tone, none of the overtones that your accordion is producing will be lost and the sound will be truer to the original sound.

Yeah, San Francisco! According to Gordon Piatanesi, formerly of Colombo Accordions, craftsmen began building piano accordions in San Francisco at almost the

Driving Directions to Verde Club

Mariposa is in the Potrero District of San Francisco and you will find the Verde Club at 2424 Mariposa 1/2 block west of the intersection of Mariposa and Potrero. Mariposa runs parallel to 17th and 18th St. and is located between them.

If you are coming from the South you can take either 101 or 280. From 101 turn off at Vermont St. and go two blocks to 16th St. Turn left and go 3 blocks to Potrero, turn left and in two blocks turn right on Mariposa.

If you are on 280 it merges into 101 at Army Street/ Caesar Chavez. Follow the directions above on 280.

From Marin bring your map! One route is to turn left from Park Presidio onto Fulton, right onto Stanyan and left onto Oak. Right onto Divisadero which becomes Castro. Cross Market and turn left on 17th St. and continue on 17th to Potrero. Turn right, go one block then right onto Mariposa.

An alternative from Marin is to turn left onto Fell St. Take a slight right onto 10th St and a slight right onto Potrero ave. Turn right onto Mariposa St.

From East Bay one possibility is to get off at 9th St./ Civic Center, keep right at the fork in the ramp and turn left onto Harrison St. Turn left onto 10th St. Turn slight right onto Potrero Ave. and than right onto Mariposa.

.....
 same time as they did in Italy. The Guerrini Accordion Company was started in S.F. in the late 1800s, about the same time that the piano accordion was invented. The last local accordion maker, Pacific Accordion, went out of business in the early 1950s. Piatanesi doesn't know if Guerrini began building piano accordions from the start.

Yeah, Colombo! Gordon Piatanesi's grandfather, Colombo, played an important role in the evolution of the accordion. In 1907 Colombo Piatanesi and his partner, Pasquali Petromilli, bought the Guerrini Accordion Company. (One wonders if the 1906 earthquake had anything to do with Guerrini's decision to go back to Italy). It was Colombo Piatanesi and Pietro Diero who subsequently developed what was then called the "extended keyboard." Prior to this development, piano accordions had very small keys (both short and skinny) and the keyboard was the same length as the body of the accordion. They lengthened the keys, made the keyboard longer than the body of the accordion, and extended the range of the keyboard to 41 keys. This is the configuration that is still standard to this day in a full-sized accordion.

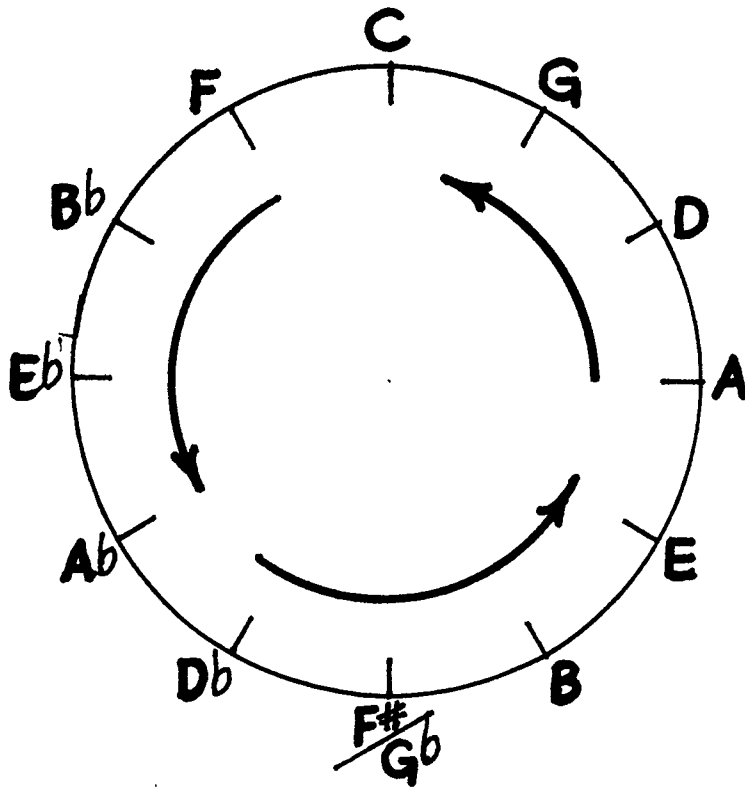
Accordion answer man Boaz Rubin is a professional repairman based in Oakland. Send your accordion-care questions to Boaz care of this newsletter or e-mail Boaz at: schmatte@well.com.

Composers and musicians established long ago that the most effective harmonic movement in any musical key is a descending sequence of chords wherein each chord progresses to another whose ROOT is five tones lower.

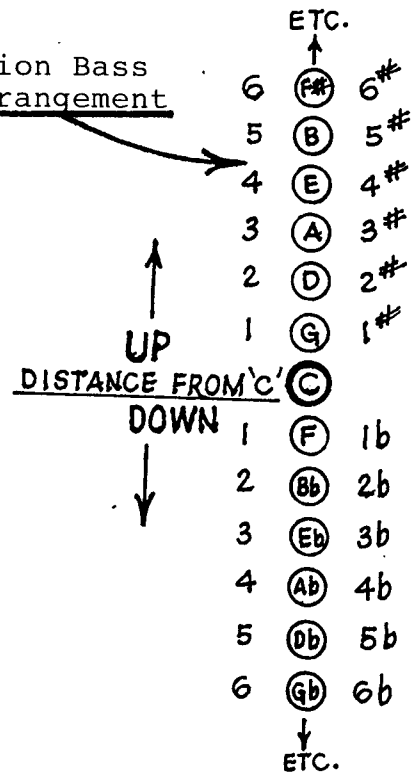
We can build a "daisy chain" of roots which are five tones apart by linking together major triads to illustrate this basic concept. (We could also string together twelve tetrachords and get the same result!)

C-e-G-b-D-f#-A-c#-E-g#-B-d#-F#/Gb-Bb-Db-f-Ab-c-Eb-g-Bb-d-F-a-C

Connecting the ends gives us a "Circle of Fifths."



Accordion Bass
Key Arrangement



Any note on the circle could be the ROOT of the "Home Base" chord, or key center in a tune. Basically, most songs begin and end on the "Home Base" chord. After the opening chord, the harmonic movement most frequently "jumps" clockwise one or more stops to a new chord. It then progresses counter-clockwise back to "Home Base", playing a chord on each root stop along the way, for example C-A-D-G-C or Eb-C-F-Bb-Eb. For the accordionist, this translates into "jumping UP" on left hand bass buttons, and "progressing DOWN" to Home Base. Occasionally, a "jump" down is called for, and you then progress up back to Home Base.

Most popular songs are 32 bars in length; four sections containing eight bars each. Chord progressions are often in units of four, or two from any segment on the circle, so the ability to mentally picture the layout is most important! The arrangement of Fundamental bass and Counter bass buttons on the accordion is basically two Circles of Fifths spaced a major third apart. It is a musical road map and guide. Accordionists should be eternally grateful to the genius who translated it into the accordion Stradella bass system.

To see how this all works out, try the arrangement on the next page of "In My Merry Oldsmobile." I have placed small circular "root indicators" above the bars where the harmony chord changes occur.

In My Merry Oldsmobile

The musical score is written in 3/4 time and consists of six systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Above the treble staff, there are circular diagrams showing guitar chord fingerings for C, G, D, and A. Below the bass staff, there are chord symbols: C, M, A 7, D 7, G 7, C# dim., D mi., G7, C M, A 7, D 7, G 7, C M, E7 Ami, D 7, G 7, and C M. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

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Val Kieser

If you would like to play at a meeting contact Bob Berta at 510-450-5766