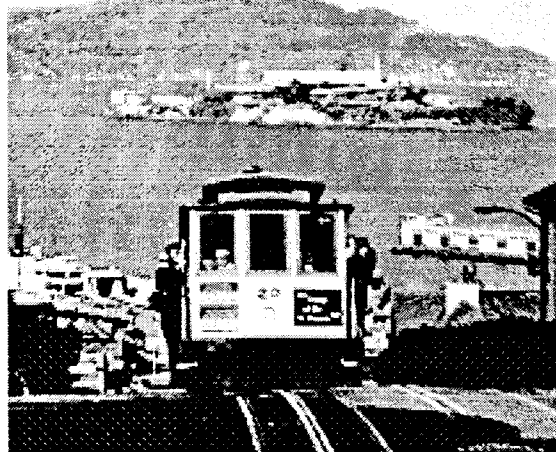


NEWSLETTER OF THE  
SAN FRANCISCO  
**BAY AREA  
ACCORDION CLUB**



## ***FEBRUARY MEETING***

*By Bob Berta*

**Dominic Palmisano** opened the meeting with additional discussion concerning the new meeting location and modifications to the facility. Several members worked hard to modify the existing stage, lowering it 6" as a result of a recommendation at the previous meeting. The new arrangement appears to have solved the problem...at least no one got a nose bleed from the high altitude! Parking situation is an issue for many. After **Clyde Forsman** asked if the membership could take a vote on maintaining the new arrangement or going back to the House of Parties, The majority voted to stay at the new location. **Dominic** said that the club needs to keep moving forward, and that it would be counterproductive to go back to the old location. He listed several reasons: space, noise, restroom location, etc. Several members suggested other locations. **Dominic** said that the Board had already researched most of those suggested locations but was still willing to look for a better alternative.

**Dominic** suggested that ALL MEMBERS should research possible locations, make initial contacts regarding cost, availability, size, parking, etc., and if a feasible alternative is found, present that info to the Board for additional research.

**Frank Montoro** gave the financial

report which showed \$8479. in the two bank accounts.

First up in the entertainment portion of the meeting was **Dennis Stoscher**. **Denny** gave an unusual performance mixing music and comedy to announce the upcoming BAAC annual picnic to be held the first Sunday in June. Many things need to be done to make the event a success. Your participation will be solicited in the upcoming months.

Next on the program was the trio of **Tony DiBono**, **Lee Woodall**, and **Jim Firpo** playing a medley of standards and Italian songs ending with the "Beer Barrel Polka." These three members play well together, and we enjoyed their fine performance. There is nothing like a few accordions playing together; all of the different "voices" of each accordion add to the tonal qualities of the ensemble creating a unique sound.

President **Dominic Palmisano** and **Cindy Tuculet** next treated us to a lovely group of French songs and to the theme from the "Godfather." I wish I had brought a loaf of french bread, some brie cheese, and a bottle of wine to the meeting...the fine music made me certain that I was in France.

After a brief intermission, **Bob Berta** played his own arrangement entitled "Invention for Stomach Steinway," based

cont. on p. 2



February 1994

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**February 27th, Sunday.** Accordion Variety Show featuring **Horace Lazzari**, **Joe Morelli**, **Ken Olendorf**, and **Chuck Berger**. Shoreline Community College Little Theater, Bldg. 300, 16101 Greenwood Ave. No., Seattle. 2:00PM. Tickets \$10. at door. Sponsored by Petosa Accordions. For discounted (\$9.) tickets and map, write to them at 313 NE 45th St. Seattle, 98105.

**March 1st, Tuesday.** BAAC General Meeting in Daly City, 285 Abbott Avenue. Performers include **Leo Troitzky**, **Reno Pucci**, **Tom Cordoni**, **Marian Kelly**, and **Reno Di Bono**. The Nominating Committee will recruit three members to join its ranks. Election at the May meeting.

**March 5th and 6th, Saturday 2-10 and Sunday 12-6.** California Spring Polka Festival. Auburn Fairgrounds, 1273 High Street, Auburn, CA. Jamers welcome. Features wooden dance floor, locally brewed beer, and home cooked food. Call **Fred Doster** (916) 889-1626.

**March 9th, Wednesday.** BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30PM. **Ed Massolo's** home, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. 415-589-8409.





*Cindy Tuculet*

**March 15-25.** All Star Hawaiian Polka Tour. Great bands include Frankie Yankovic. Contact Sam's Country Polka Gems, 503-424-2282.

**March 26th, Saturday.** Veikko Ahvenainen at the German-American Club, 230 Plymouth, Santa Cruz, 6:30 P.M. Includes dinner, entertainment, dancing. \$10.00. Call Dennis Reader at 408-728-1988 for info or if you wish to entertain at subsequent meetings, held on 3rd Saturdays.

**May 3, Tuesday.** Ladies' Night at BAAC. Calling all fair sex accordionists....*please be there and play!* Call Ed Massolo, 415-589-8409. This is also Election Night.

**June 5, Sunday.** BAAC Annual Picnic, Elks Club, Palo Alto. Save the date! The June general meeting, which would ordinarily be held on Tuesday, the 8th, has been cancelled.

**July 4-9, KIOTAC, Kimberley, B.C. Canada.** 20th Anniversary. Sign up for competition or accommodations. Call 604-427-3922.



*Our New Home*

*February Gen'l Meeting, from p. 1*

loosely on J.S. Bach's Invention #13, on his midi accordion. **Bob** announced tongue in cheek that he found it hidden in an old Hohner accordion. After the performance he handed out copies of the composition to all members. **Bob** enjoys arranging and composing music and encourages other members to show off their own arrangements or compositions at upcoming meetings. Next, **Bob** played his arrangements of Chopin's "Nocturne" and Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Domenic Saso asked for one additional piece, and Bob obliged by playing Beethoven's "Für Elise."

After a quick tear down of the stage to provide more room, we settled in to hear **Joe Smiell** and the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble (**Jerry Kramer, Peter Di Bono, John Molinari, Marian Kelly, Dominic Palmisano, Don Nurisso, Joe E. Smiell, and Bob Smith**). **Bart Beninco** couldn't be there, and was missed. They began with a fine arrangement by **Joe** of "The Star Spangled Banner." Next, **Joe** introduced his wonderful arrangement of "Universal Judgment", which he also calls an Italian overture. Before playing it, **Joe** explained the history of the piece and talked about some of the components. It was certainly a dramatic selection, with musical "angels" appearing, and all types of musical action creating a "picture" in our minds of the events of the musical story about an Italian trying to get into heaven. The Ensemble finished with a terrific march which **Joe** has simply titled "Russian March".



*Dennis Stoscher*



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## WHO'S PLAYING???

- **Lou Casalnuovo** and his trio (bass, drums), play jazz and standards Wednesday evenings till further notice from 5 - 8 PM at the House of Shields, 39 New Montgomery St, across from the Sheraton Palace Hotel. Please stop by and say hello!
- For weekend fun, catch **Algis Ratnikas** and the Cafe Babar Jug Band any Saturday evening in February, 9 to 1 AM. They're at Malloy's in Colma, on 1750 Mission St.
- If you're near San Juan Bautista, you might stop at the Donkey Deli, right across the street from the bakery which makes wonderful, aromatic panettone. Glenn McClelland enthusiastically tells us that the Deli serves a great brunch from 9 to 1. Each Sunday afternoon, they feature an **informal gathering of button boxers**. Glenn writes that the music is great, but he spent most of his note raving about the food, (he was there another night for dinner), which is, he says "delicious German, exquisitely presented...excellent German beer...fresh, hot rolls from across the street..10 entrees, ..knockout salad...delicious soup..full dinner for \$8.95 to \$11.95."

## FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

### Synopsis

- Treasurer Frank Montoro reported a total of \$8478. in checking and savings accounts.
- The Nominating Committee, chaired by Josephine Hornbrook (Ed Massolo assisting), will ask for three volunteers to join them at the March general meeting. The Committee will present a slate of suggested officers at the April meeting; elections will be held in May.
- It was agreed that the Program Committee take greater care to enforce time limits on performers at general meetings. Performers may play two numbers and a third if the audience wishes it.
- This year's Picnic on June 5th will be slimmed down and simplified. We will encourage but not solicit donations of door prizes, and there will be no raffle. We will also not invite a caterer. Frank Montoro and Algis Ratnikas will co-chair.
- Marian Kelly read the letter sent in the name of the Club to the lawyer processing Vladimir Kallistov's application for residency. The letter describes the Club's reactions to Vladimir's playing and requests that the I.N.S. grant residency to him and his family.
- PBS is preparing a documentary titled "Frank Yankovic: America's Polka King," to be aired on PBS late this year. The Board voted to donate \$100 to be used by those preparing the film. If anyone has photos or film of Yankovic from the '30s through the '70s, or should you wish to make a donation yourself, contact producer Thomas Ciesielka, Center for New Television, 736 West California Terrace #1, Chicago, IL 60657. Phone (312) 472-9293.
- The Board accepted the resignation of Dennis Stoscher. MK



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## A Hug

reprinted from the New Yorker, September 21, 1992

Guy Klucevsek is a serious man. You would be, too, if when you played wild accordion variations on beer-hall polkas reviewers complained that you weren't fully exploring the possibilities of the instrument, and when you played compositions that were absolutely new and inventive you were accused of ignoring the accordion's tradition. It's a strange time for the accordion. Two of the most famous accordionists ever, Lawrence Welk and Astor Piazzolla, died this year. Welk, the anti-accordionist to several generations, gave the instrument its bad reputation. Piazzolla was the revolutionary who introduced jazz to the Argentine tango, rescuing the tango from rose-in-the-mouth posturing. And now it is finally possible to begin an accordion story without a "Lady of Spain" joke and without the excuse of rock-and-roll crossover trends.

We decided to talk to Guy Klucevsek because, at forty-five, he is a major figure in the accordion world. Guy, who lives with his wife on Staten Island, is one of only two or three important accordion composers, and he has worked with such groups as the Kronos Quartet and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. There has been very little work written with the accordion in mind (Tchaikovsky and Virgil Thomson are among the few major composers who made the attempt), so Guy's project in life has been to build a body of work for his chosen instrument. In addition to writing his own works, he has commissioned about fifty pieces from downtown musicians, most of them under the banner "Polka from the Fringe." Some of them sound like full-orchestra versions of car crashes or sandstorms. But no matter what Guy plays, he always has to fight novelty-act status. When he talks about the dilemma he's in, he takes off his heavy glasses, rubs his eyes, and stares off his frustration.

Guy was patient enough to show us his accordions. He plays the free-bass accordion, on which the left-hand buttons are not locked into specific accompanying chords. The buttons play individual notes, so contrapuntal melody is possible. His accordions — he owns four at the moment — are black and sleek. Once, at a festival in New York full of gaudy, sequinned instruments, he and another concert accordionist walked onstage with their twelve-thousand-dollar Giulietti and Titano accordions, and someone in the audience called out, "Oh-oh! Here come the Harleys!"

But with his latest record, "Manhattan Cascade," Guy seems to have reconciled the polka with the profound. On one of the cuts, the composer John Zorn's cartoon-inspired "Road Runner" sounds like jars full of musical genres being knocked off the kitchen shelf, and on another, "Ping Pong Polka," Guy improvises to a stack of old polka records being spun and scratched by Christian Marclay. The title track, composed by Lois V. Vierk, builds on fluttering minimalist mathematics and suggests the mad energy of New York City. "The two sides of my work cross-fertilize each other," Guy says. "Things the composers see in the instrument and in my personality inspire them, and their techniques and ideas slip into my own compositions."

We left with technical notes and lists of recordings, but we wanted more — the *meaning* of the accordion. To get real perspective we needed a different kind of expert, and we thought right away of the accordion-hoarding artist Max Miller. We first heard of Max when a friend showed us the Christmas card he sent out last year. It was a large color photograph of Max in front of a pile of broken-down accordions, and Max was mooning the camera.

Max, who lives in Williamsburg, is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and of Yale, and his art work is in

the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, Chase Manhattan, I.B.M., and Edward Albee. We arranged to meet him, and took the L train to Brooklyn. We turned the wrong way at a Polish bar, though, and when we finally got to Max's studio, we found him sitting on the curb in big pink shorts. Max is thirty-five, and has a long brown ponytail. He took us up to his loft, showed us some of his new projects—fluorescent encaustic ladled onto metal buckets, two balls of chewing gum a foot and a half in diameter—and then we climbed up to the roof and looked out over Williamsburg. He told us that it was no Left Bank, and that he was moving soon. He had packed most of his hundred and twenty accordions in their cases, he said, and then, looking at them stacked up, had decided that they had even more power displayed that way.

Most of the accordions don't work, but then Max isn't a musician. We unpacked a small black accordion that looked intact and tried to play it, thinking that we could launch right into Piazzolla's "Michelangelo 70." It was hard to concentrate on pressing the keys with one hand and the buttons with the other and to remember to keep opening and closing the bellows. We made the accordion ululate and we made it chirr, and then we just held the air button down and pushed the accordion open and closed, making a breathing sound—our puny John Cage tribute. Max unpacked a few more accordions—some pristine and beautiful, with ivory inlays and Art Nouveau mother-of-pearl flowers, and some derelict, with missing keys suggesting knocked-out teeth.

"To play the accordion, you embrace it," Max told us. "It's a hug, and the instrument becomes part of your body. You're more intimate with it than with any other instrument, and that's why accordions take on personalities of their own over the years—the funky colors,

## THE ACCORDION — HOW I BECAME HOOKED.

By Glenn McClelland

Ten years ago on a trip through the British Isles my wife and I heard in Edinburgh a young man play exquisitely on his accordion a number of Scottish folk songs. I decided then and there, from envy or admiration or a mixture of both, that if he could play that instrument so beautifully, so could I. The idea of actually becoming an accordionist lay dormant for a couple years until one day a good friend of mine asked if I wanted to drive up to San Rafael with him to get his accordion which was being repaired.

I met Paul Pasquali that day and of course Gordon Piatanesi, and I fell in love with the accordion all over again and bought one on the spot. I have played the piano for many years by ear and I believed that I could play the accordion as well. Little did I realize the hours and hours of practice that learning the accordion would require. My friend took me aside a few months ago and told me if I really wanted to learn to play the accordion well, I must take lessons and that, even more important than the lessons, I must practice one hour a day without fail.

Obviously an impossible task. But I began to settle into a routine. Early in the morning, fresh and without distractions such as the newspaper, TV, or even breakfast, I found that I really enjoyed practicing, actually looked forward to this time period, and even resented being asked to change the routine. It's a great way to start the day, making music with your fingers. Your heart seems to beat stronger, you breathe more deeply, and your spirits unconsciously lift.

My teacher brought me to my first BAAC meeting last year, then to the Galla-Rini fete, and from there on I was hooked. Later last year I bought my wife an accordion, and now there are two nuts in the house. Naturally we've been married 46 years, and it doesn't look as if even accordions can tear us apart. Truthfully, we really enjoy playing duets together. Marian Kelly and Peter DiBono gave me the idea. Of course, they're not married to each other, but oh! they played so well together.

We've enjoyed our association with BAAC, its monthly meetings, going up to Cotati, and are looking forward to the annual picnic in June in Palo Alto. But most of all, we've enjoyed the friendships we've made among the members. Young and old and many in between, male or female, proficient or beginner, professional or amateur, it doesn't seem to matter. We all have one thing in common: we love to play the accordion. Not in a vain or show off way, but simply to satisfy our own urge to make music. If we make others around us happy then that's so much the better and an extra bonus. So that's what holds us together.

## GATHERING OF MIDIS.

Bob Berta reports a successful gathering at his home on Feb. 5th of members interested in MIDI accordions and MIDI music. The group wishes to be a new resource for BAAC members.

The group spent time discussing hardware comparisons (sound modules, drum machines, mixers, speakers, amps), sequencer software, different types and brands of MIDI accordions, how to get new sound combinations, and on reviewing and swapping music.

Future meetings will be held during the week to allow more people to attend. If you have not already contacted Bob to express your interest in MIDI, please call him at (415) 756-8309. Those who are interested but who do not play a MIDI are especially welcome.

### *A Hug, cont. from p.4*

the finger-stained keys, the duct tape patching up the cardboard-and-canvas bellows. But there's even more than that to it." Piled up there in Max's loft, the accordions seemed like historical documents, evoking boxcars, bar mitzvahs, slapstick vaudeville routines, and Seeing Eye dogs guarding cases full of tossed change. One thing Max wants to do is make a book of life-size photographs of his accordions, the book's cover to be of speckled faux-tortoiseshell. He plans to use an accordion binding, so that the book can be stretched out and zigzag across a room, and can even be mock-played. An Überaccordion. Another thing Max is going to do, maybe, is learn to play. At the moment, he said, a few crazy squawks go a long way toward entertaining his friends. "The accordion is sad, but it's funny, too," he said. "It's tragicomic. And maybe that's what comes next, after Welk and Piazzolla: a coming together of the silly and the serious—the realization that with the accordion you *have* to build on that split personality."

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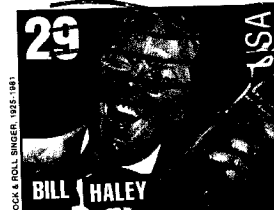
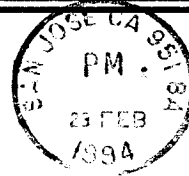
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