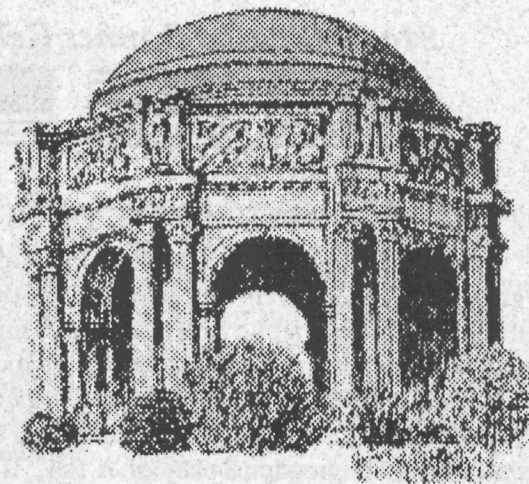


NEWSLETTER OF THE
SAN FRANCISCO
**BAY AREA
ACCORDION CLUB**



EDITORS: Marian Kelly
Dominic Palmisano

March, 1993

March Meeting

Just the usual 140-plus in attendance for what turned out to be one of the longest meetings on record! It was great to see **Al Maccari, George Poli, Ernest Lantz, Lucio Del Fonte, Don Cervelli, Josephine Hornbrook** with guest **Toni Catalano** (our beloved Joe's wife) and a whole bunch of other members with their guests celebrating our monthly get-together. Among the missing were **Peter DiBono, Gordon Piatanesi** of Colombo & Sons, **Steve Cannata, Kenny Judnick** of the OEEE Club, **Joan Traverso, Lee & Walter Woodall** and **Jean Pierre Pagola** who had surgery. Without further adue, let's get on with the show.

CENTER STAGE PLEASE!...

Our vice-president, **Marian Kelly**, opened the meeting knowing the musical program was going to be a lengthy one. A few business items (**Walter Traverso** needs items for the picnic raffle and volunteers to work various areas at the picnic, call Walter at 415-585-0144) were quickly handled. Then, **Domenic Saso** started the musical presentation introducing **Frank Montoro** who played some pretty arrangements on his midi. The pieces included *Los Altos Train, I'll Return, A Little Bit of Your Love, Here's That Rainy Day/Misty/Someone to Watch*

Over Me and *Muskrat Ramble* (Frank is becoming one of the best midi players in the area)...Comical and entertaining **Val Ballerini** was up next performing *That's Amore, Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White, Amapola, Shake Rattle & Roll* and ended with *My Love Forgive Me*...Then one of the San Francisco Ensemble, **Bart Beninco**, knocked our socks off with Maganante's *Dark Eyes, Tango of the Roses* and an Italian *Tarantella* (All you can say is "what a great player"!)...Next,
continued on page 5



Jim Boggio

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

March 24, 7:30 P.M. BAAC Board Meeting at Frank Montoro's. Call 574-4757.

March 27 - April 4, International Accordion Celebration, Toronto, Canada. Call Joseph Macerollo, 416-625-0422.

April 5, Monday, BAAC's General Meeting, featuring Ken Olen Dorf from Seattle, Stas Wisniach, and Lou Soper. Nominating Committee presents slate of officers; nominations from floor accepted.

April 23-25, Natick, Massachusetts. NEFFA!, New England's longest running folk festival featuring Cajun music, dancing, workshops, concerts, ethnic foods, crafts. 617-354-1340

May 3, Monday, BAAC's General Meeting, featuring *Ladies Night*. Female accordionists only. Annual election of officers. Must be present to vote.

June 6th, Sunday. BAAC picnic, Elks Club, Palo Alto.

July 8-11, ATG 1993 National Competition, Milwaukee, WI, with Myron Floren, guest of honor. Includes contests in music and composing. Write to Julie and Juha Silfverberg, P. O. Box 22342, Kansas City, MO 64113.

August 28, 29, Cotati Accordion Festival.

Star Spangled Banner Rehearsal



WE WANT YOU!

At the March Meeting, Dominic Palmisano proposed that a group of 20 to 25 players rehearse the Star Spangled Banner with the intent of going public with it. Dominic suggested that a demo tape be produced and circulated among the sports community and other organizations as a way of promoting the accordion, national exposure being the goal. Joe Smiell agreed to write the parts in the official congressional key of A flat. If you would like to participate call Dominic at 415-587-4495.

WHO'SPLAYING?

- *Algis Ratnikas* will be playing with the Cafe Babar Jug Band at Cafe Soma, 1601 Howard St., San Francisco March 17th, April 2nd, and every other Friday.
- *Marian Kelly* and nine other musicians will be in the orchestra pit for the Palo Alto Players' production "The Bakers Wife" set in Provence to be held weekends (Thurs-Sun) at Lucie Stern Theater from April 16th through May 8th. (415)329-2623.
- Special guest *Dick Contino* at the Balboa High Vaudeville Fol de Rol, sponsored by the Alumni Association, April 24th at 2 PM. Call (415) 469-4090.

VEIKKO AHVENAINEN CONCERT

If you missed Veikko Ahvenainen's fantastic performance at the Mercy High School Arts Theater on Sunday, March 7th, you missed an amazing display of musicianship by a world class performer. The event was memorable because the audience experienced this handsome Finnish born virtuoso closely and because his personal magnetism and his impressive musical talents led us through a wide range of moods. He demonstrated that the range of the acoustic accordion includes a wide variety of musical types, from *Home on the Range* through a verbal and musical description of the cuckoo bird, missing from American shores but regarded as a prophet in Finland, to a magnificently moving original piece called *Sorrow*, dedicated to the late John Mc Linari to an amazing interpretation of Vivaldi's *Winter* from "The Four Seasons." The bellows control which he demonstrated left us all breathless. Then he played another original piece, *Rainy Morning* and *North Storm*, that made the concert hall echo with surrealistic sounds of thunder as from a cold and wet Artic tempest. Again, what made the performance so exceptional was his mastery of the bellows, the heart and soul of our instrument.



At the end, the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble joined Veikko for a Frosini waltz, *Olive Blossoms*, and Vittorio Monti's *Czardas*. The audience immediately responded with a long standing ovation. Veikko's encore, was a simultaneous rendition of *Dixie* on the right hand and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* on the left. We challenge you to try that sometime.

Backstage during rehearsal with the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble, Veikko took his accordion out of a symmetrical aluminum canister. What came from this protective-like womb was his

favorite instrument, a button bayon handcrafted by Mr. Juri Volkovich in the Soviet Union, one of only 16 such instruments normally given by the Cultural Ministry to deserving Soviet musicians. The left hand converts from stradella to bassetti, enhancing the magnificent sounds displayed by this rare instrument.

During the concert, Veikko reminisced, sharing a wide variety of his experiences through Russia and Europe, and we all came to appreciate his place in current accordion history. Although he was obviously well trained musically, he has never taken an accordion lesson even though he has played since age 9, but instead has applied musical knowledge to our instrument, creating his own unique style.

Members of the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble showed off their considerable skills in the first section of the program with six pieces beautifully arranged and conducted by Joe Smiell. Your editors won't try to critique that part of the program for obvious reasons.

Veikko's performance was indeed an extraordinary one, by a true legend of our time. We are honored to have made Mr. Ahvenainen's acquaintance, and we trust that this is the beginning of a new friendship for the Bay Area Accordion Club.

D.P. & M.K.

TOM'S TANTALIZING TIDBITS

March, 1993



On February 27, Those Darn Accordions played to a sold-out show at the cavernous Luther Burbank Center in Santa

Rosa. We opened for Motown legends, the Temptations. The audience particularly liked our rendition of *Sing, Sing, Sing* and *We're An Accordion Band*. But the real reason I mention this show is because it's the first time we have opened for a band of this stature that did not have an accordion in it. In essence, after four years, we've finally broken through the "genre" bookings or novelty acts bookings. We were able to showcase not only our talents, but the accordion, to an audience that could care less about the accordion. These people came to that show to see an incredible group sing the songs from their youth. But, you know what, after the show lots and lots of people came up to me and said how much they enjoyed our performance. Until now, I've only pursued opening slots with top bands that had an accordion player in them (Z. Richard, Tornados, Queen Ida, etc.), regardless of the type of music they played, because it would fit (genre booking). For example, even though we once opened for a punk-rock band, that band did a couple songs with one of its members playing the accordion. But now the field is wide open. Bottom line is that if your band has a tight, entertaining show don't be afraid to pursue non-genre bookings with other bands. The door is now open. Let's all walk through it.

I think I'm going to start the World Accordion Association. What prompts this is at the last Board meeting I brought up the idea that BAAC should try to get into a reciprocal program with the other

clubs whereby we receive a copy of their newsletter in return for a copy of our newsletter. There really needs to be better communication among the clubs. I understand that Marian Kelly sent all the clubs a copy of the letter I drafted regarding this program. I hope that all the clubs participate. Anyway, here's how my idea for the WAA would work. Each of the clubs would become members of the World Accordion Association and in essence become chapters rather than individual entities. Individuals could join as well. Nothing would change at the club level. The clubs would send me their newsletters each month; I would go through them and publish a nation-wide newsletter for all the members of the World Accordion Association. There are other functions that the WAA could serve. For example, if a performer wanted to come to the US. and perform, the WAA could set up a tour. Conversely, the WAA could set up European tours for US. performers. I could set up a computer bulletin board for everyone in the world to access. Think of it! Instant on-line access to teachers, festivals, repair places, upcoming shows, and so forth. Each of you could leave information or browse through information. The technology is available; why not use it? Your thoughts?

As you all know, June is National Accordion Awareness Month. As of February 15, I already received two requests for information about NAAM. These people also want any information they can get about the accordion in general (newsletters, photos, etc.) If you would like to send them some information, please send it to Carol Hartley, Jeanes Vital Age, 121 Huntingdon Pike, Rockledge PA 19111 and Marylee Booth, Wayne County Public Library, 1001 E. Ash Street, Goldsboro, NC 27530.

Do you know the way to old LA? If so, be sure to check out the Breaux Bridge

Accordion Festival. It's happening on July 5-7 in B.B., Louisiana and is sponsored by Mulate's Restaurant. The contact is Jake and he can be reached at 1-800-42CAJUN (22586). He told me that last year they had about 6,000 people show up. Sounds like a good time to me.

Around the horn. Tim Tyree at *a.k.a. Akkordeon* has a series of cute bumper stickers that every accordion player must have. They include "I'd Rather be Playing My Accordion", the perfunctory "I 'Heart' the Accordion" and so forth. Tim can even customize bumper stickers for you. Hey, promote your club with a bumper sticker! He can also produce buttons and other merchandise. He's working on an erasable white board for teaching purposes. I think Those Darn Accordions are going to get bumper stickers that say...I guess you'll just have to wait and find out. If you would like to order some stickers or other stuff, call Tim at (916)-635-5327.

Yes, it's true. The Bastari Concertina Company in Italy has been purchased by the Stagi company.

Tom Torriglia

DON'T MISS

Our Special Guest

Ken Olendorf

coming from Seattle
to play for us

at our April General Meeting.

Profile of.....Don Nurisso

Don's musical career had its beginnings in 1949 with the arrival of a 12-bass accordion from Genoa, Italy into his San Francisco home. The idea of playing accordion probably came from the fact that Don's cousins played accordion and that his father, a "closet" violinist, may have had some musical notions of his own. John Anconi, an immigrant accordion teacher from Castelfidardo, was Don's first accordion teacher. He confesses that he was not a good student while studying with Anconi. During that ten year period, though, someone gave Don an Art Van Damme album, and he began to listen to Art's music, sometimes spending hours trying to copy a bar or a phrase rather than practicing his lesson. He joined a school band and an accordion orchestra and played Slovenian polkas on Potrero Hill.

When John Anconi returned to Castelfidardo in 1959, someone introduced Don to Dino Benetti. Still Don learned the instrument in his own way, sometimes calling in "sick" because he hadn't practiced his lesson. Somehow, he stayed with Dino for six years. Today, Don credits Dino with having taught him 90% of what he knows. He started playing casuals which no doubt gave him a great lift playing for audiences.

After graduating from U.C. Berkeley in 1967, Don began to pursue his career as a mechanical engineer. His first job took him to La Crosse, Wisconsin in February, the middle of winter, where he reports the icy cold mid-west weather was an unpleasant surprise. He continued his music playing casuals for the two years he was there. His most memorable engagement was playing for the wedding of Henry Kaiser's grandson. He recalls that he played Kaiser's favorite tune, the Pennsylvania Polka, until two in the morning.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, Don's mid-west stay was cut short as he was drafted into the Army in 1969, the Vietnam era. As a young engineer, the army did a most unusual thing — they didn't send him to cook's school. Instead they used his training as an engineer and sent him to Fort Meade, Maryland.

He spent his off duty time playing casuals, mostly at Officers' Clubs, for pay. The army liked his music so much they made him an offer he had to refuse — a spot in an army band if he remained another year and a half.

Back in San Francisco, he found John Molinari Sr. who sold him his current Giulietti. He really loves this instrument for its "singing" tone quality and it has

accompanied him on countless jobs playing with such locals as Ray Hackett, Walt Tolleson, and Mimi Gina.

Then the drought hit. Accordions faded from the scene in the 80's and Don put his music on hold. (For most of us, the drought started much earlier.)

About a year and a half ago, a guy named Lou Soper invited Don to join BAAC and he agreed to attend a meeting. With no time to work up material, Don played several jazz tunes and he was hooked. Soon after that he was invited to join the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble. Don's interest in music was definitely at a peak and he has been on an upward spiral ever since. He has a high regard for the inspired leadership of Joe Smiell (and don't we all?) and considers the experience of playing with the ensemble the greatest musical experience of his life.

About his personal life, John is married to Carol, who teaches chemistry at Mercy High School, San Francisco. Don is a mechanical engineer with P.G & E. They have a 19 year old son, John, and they live in Pacifica. Don and Carol have been married for 3 1/2 years, and, according to Don, proves that Italians and Pollacks can get along.

Frank Montoro

February BAAC Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Gordon Piatanesi has donated a new microphone to the Club.
- The Treasurer presented an income statement for the last six months of 1992 showing expenses slightly in excess of amounts budgeted for the newsletter and for the President. Other expenses were at or below predicted amounts. It also showed more income than budgeted, giving us a net small increase for the six month period.
- Walter and Frank reported on details of the picnic plans.
- Marian reported on plans for the upcoming Ahvenainen concert.
- Tom Torriglia proposed we increase our newsletter circulation to include other accordion clubs in the country of which we are aware if they will agree to a newsletter exchange. Tom will provide addresses and draft a letter which Marian will send to clubs not currently on our mailing list.
- Marian reported on plans for the Cotati festival; a board of directors and working committees have been formed to spread responsibilities more than previously.
- Tom Torriglia and Frank Montoro are the board representatives to the five person nominating committee.

MK

March General Meeting, Continued from Page 1

Marian Kelly and Jerry Kramer demonstrated a simple solo and duet which Joe Smiell has written and are available to club members...Just before intermission Marian announced that Ledo Dal Porto donated \$100 to the club as a special thanks to co-founder, Walter Traverso, for his contribution to the accordion community. Also, Ledo will be acting as our sound system consultant to improve our current facility (That's really good news!). Finally, the nominating committee was formed for the upcoming election. The group of Josephine Hornbrook, Domenic Saso, Adam Smith, Tom Torriglia and Frank Montoro will be handling the duties...

The second half opened with the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble playing three great pieces, *Valse Trieste* by Sibelius, Frescobaldi's *Tocatta* and *Spanish March*. Their conductor, Joe Smiell, has brought the Ensemble a long way since its infancy. In the future, look to see others joining the Ensemble for a Star Spangled Banner presentation...Bob Delgado followed with Magnante's *Waltz Allegro*, *Espana Cani*, Diero's *Beautiful Days* and ended with music from the *Godfather* including *Speak Softly Love*. Here is another example of a great accordionist that few have heard. This guy is welcomed anytime! The finale was performed by a Master accordion

player, Jim Boggio with a couple of his Swamp Dogs. Not only is Jim one of the best accordionists you'll ever hear, but his style of entertaining always brings down the house! Tunes such as *Crazy Rhythm*, *Softly as a Morning Sunrise*, *Tico Tico*, *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Just a Gigolo/I Ain't Got Nobody* drove this crowd to its feet for a resounding standing ovation...

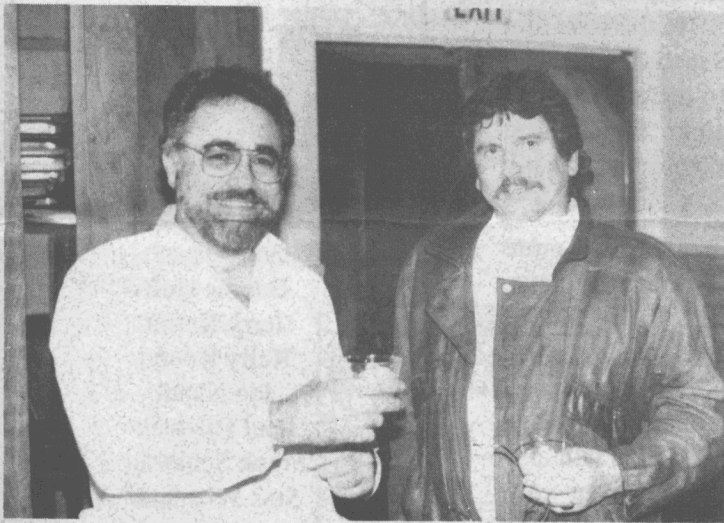
Then, even though it was late, a big crowd adjourned to Lyons for more! See you all at the next meeting, April 5th.

Barb Hartley



and Dominic Palmisano

Photos courtesy of Cindy Tuculet



Bart Beninco and Dominic Palmisano



Lou Casalnuova, Don Nurisso, Jim Boggio



Bob Delgado

Do You Know.....*Sharon Shannon*??

If anyone is concerned about the future of the accordion in Ireland, they can rest at ease. A dynamic 22 year old Irish woman, Sharon Shannon, was the hit of the Celtic Festival last month. She plays fiddle as well as diatonic accordion, but it's her accordion playing that brings the house down! Her style is impeccable, building phrases inside of phrases and punching notes with an intimate flair. Sharon has been touring with her own band for more than a year and has toured previously with the Waterboys and the esteemed Christy Moore. While her music is always Irish, she tastefully blends other influences such as Cajun, reggae and eastern European. It's always great to see a young person come along who can really play and inspire a new generation of accordion players. Her CD, "Sharon Shannon," is on Ireland's Solid Records, and is available at Down Home Records in El Cerrito.

by Art Peterson

SEQUENCERS and Other MIDI Devices

What can they do for you??

The new MIDI accordions are incredibly versatile instruments but often many possible features are overlooked when MIDIs are used solely as a live performance instrument.

MIDI is a unique digital standard partly because it allows interconnecting of various pieces of equipment and computers, which can then communicate with each other in computer talk, opening up many possibilities. While I won't get into the innermost workings of computers and MIDI, I would like to talk a little about one particularly interesting piece of MIDI equipment, a computer sequencer, and what you can do with it.

A sequencer is a device that allows you to record digitally what you are playing, to modify it if you wish, and to play it back. You might ask how that is different from a tape recorder.

A tape recorder records one time and can only play back only what it recorded. A sequencer records digital commands which tell your sound module to turn on and off different sounds, notes, and controllers. Once the recording is made you can edit it and assign completely different parameters to the digital recording. Since you are recording not the performance but the computer control sequence, you can decide at a future point to edit the song to sound one octave higher, a flute sound instead of a piano, duplicate parts of it and assign those parts to different instruments, while fine tuning things like volume and inflection.

If you wish to record all the parts of a musical piece, you can do it without adding any additional tape hiss or ruining what you have already recorded. You play back the first part and at the same time you record additional parts one part at a time. If you make a mistake on one part, you simply erase or skip that part and go on. Once those parts are recorded, you might find that you played one part perfectly except for one note that should have been a G instead of an A. You can edit that note on the sequencer without having to rerecord the entire part. You can also duplicate parts of your performance and assign them to different instruments. In the case of a modern Multi Timbral Sound Module, you can have as many as 16 different instrument parts at the same time. The limiting factor is the number of notes played at any one time.

To get this capability requires more equipment than you may currently have, but if you own a computer, you are almost there. Sequencers are available for nearly every computer made. A sequencer is actually a computer program. Prices range from around \$100 to \$500. You will also need a way to communicate from your computer to your sound module. The device to do this is called an interface, and you can get one for around \$75. In the case of a MIDI accordion, you will probably need one additional piece of equipment since your keyboard is separate from your sound module. That device is called a MIDI Merger and Patch Bay. You need the merger part of the patch bay to allow you to play back at the same time you are

recording. This device runs about \$175. A good place to investigate all of this equipment is "The Guitar Center" in San Francisco on Mission St.

Hooking all this up is relatively simple, but you may need some help doing the wiring connections for the first time. If you need some help or have questions, give me a call and I will help you. I can be reached at 415-756-8309.

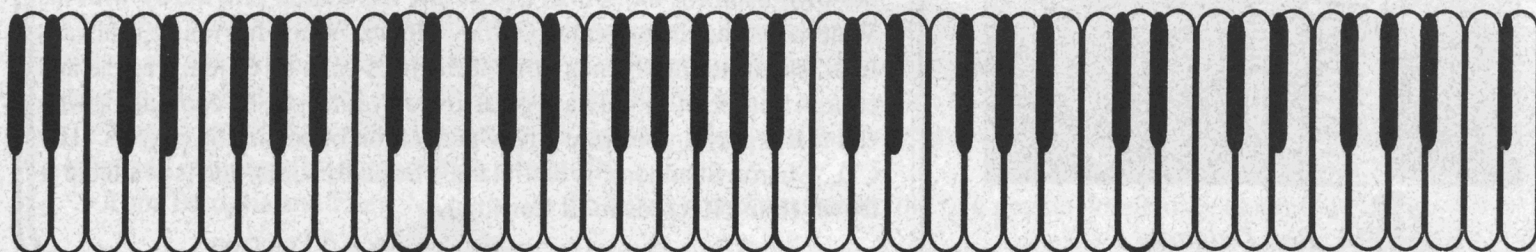
Bob Berta

NEW MEMBERS

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 Nick Campagna
 Jane Colton
 Bob Delgado
 Jean Diesch
 Dennis Huff
 Jerry Keifer
 Kelly Koehn
 Joe Nanut
 Paul Pasquali
 Frank Schlotter
 Stas Wisniach
 We're delighted to have you with us! Please give us your ideas about our club.



**Check Page 2
 for a patriotic idea!**



Two Tips On Sight Reading

by Jim Holliday (Bay Area Accordion Club)

Basically, sight reading is a matter of seeing a note on a staff, identifying the note, locating it's exact left hand or right hand keyboard position and then playing it.

Location of a note can be aided by developing tactile awareness, or touch sensitivity in the fingers. The right hand fingers can use the groups of two and three black keys as "feelers" to assist while the fingers of the left hand use marked bass buttons.

Identifying notes, using two different clefs with their respective leger lines can be a lifelong problem for some of us. Here are two tips that MAY be of some help to those people.

Method 1.

Emphasize the upper four lines of the Treble Clef, and the lower four lines of the Bass Clef.

This creates two 4-line clefs that are identical to each other, and three 'space areas' that are identical to each other.

The note 'C' is always in the center of each 4-line clef.

The note 'C' is always two leger lines above, or below each clef.

TWO 4-LINE CLEFS **THREE 'SPACE' AREAS**

Method 2.

Whenever you look at a bass clef, mentally visualize an extra line under the clef. This is an 'E' line which then converts the bass clef to sight read exactly the same as the treble clef.

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Correction: Colombo & Sons wishes to correct its
January advertisement in this newsletter. The accordion
advertised as a 1991 Petosa is a 1961 model.

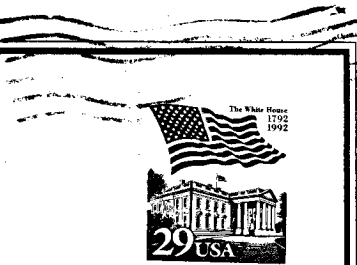
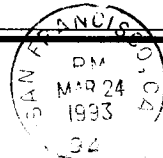
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