

BAAC PAGE

Dedicated to the accordion and related instruments through fun, service & education

STAS & MIKE: NOVEMBER 8TH

Stas Venglevski, a native of Modava, part of the former USSR, is a virtuoso of the bayan. He is a graduate of the Russian Academy of Music in Moscow and received a Masters Degree in Music, studying under the famed performer/professor Frederich Lips. He immigrated to the USA in 1992 and makes his home in Milwaukee. His wife Roza Borisova is a cellist with the famed Veronika String Quartet. Stas has a vast repertoire including works by Bach, Weber, Liszt, Schubert, Rachmaninoff, and many contemporary Russian and European composers—as well as jazz & ethnic music. He has toured extensively throughout the former USSR, Canada & the USA, performing with numerous Symphony & Chamber orchestras. He has done television commercials, theater productions & several recordings, including a transcription of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* (for bayan) and a recently released CD of original compositions, *Accordion Illusions*, also published as a book. He is absolutely brilliant.



Mike Alongi, is Chicago's (perhaps the country's) premier piano accordionist. He began studying at the age of six with his father, Vincent Alongi, Chicago's legendary music teacher. In classical music Mike has performed with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra as a soloist. He was one of the founders of the Chicago Accordion Ensemble. He has appeared with Frank Marocco, Lindy Kao, Mort Herold, Fred Rundquist (Art Van Damme's guitarist), Doc Severinsen (former *Tonight Show* trumpeter) & many jazz groups. For the past several years Mike has partnered with Stas for concerts and recordings in an almost perfect blending of talent & temperament. As a composer and arranger Mike has television and radio credits and CDs such as *Everything Old Is New Again*. He teaches accordion, keyboards, jazz and music theory and has done so for 40 years. He and his wife Joan, who also teaches, have a studio in Rockford, Illinois; they have two sons, David and John.

A LETTER FROM THE MAESTRO

Dear Paul,

It has been a number of years since I have seen and talked with you during some of my engagements for BAAC. I miss not coming to Northern California very much. However, it was necessary for me to start reducing my trips on the road—mainly for domestic reasons. However, I have never forgotten the interesting conversations we enjoyed when I was in your area. I read your article *And Tea for Two* when I received the last BAAC newsletter and I want to express my appreciation for a fine and informative effort on your part. I think you covered quite a lot of detailed information between the two basic instruments, namely the bayan and the accordion, more than anyone else I know. And—I believe you did it in an unbiased manner! I want to thank you for all of your kind words on my behalf along with the frank and factual references of my position between the two instruments (I wish some others would be as factual as you are when they quote me). Let's hope that we can meet again sometime and have a good visit.

All best wishes to you,
Anthony Galla-Rini
President Emeritus, ATG

October 2000

- October Festing
BAAC Style
- Carmine Coppola's
Accordion Concerto
- Galla-Rini Concerto
- Accordians Al Dente
- Meno Barba, Piu Voce



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OCTOBER FESTING BAAC STYLE

by Valerie T. Kieser

President Lou Soper started the meeting at 7:30. Recognizing it is not possible to accommodate the scheduling needs of everyone, but in an effort to accommodate as many as possible, he announced that meetings will start at 7:30 (rather than 7:00) with announcements—music will start at 7:45, and the break for socialization will take place from 8:30 to 9:00, after which the music will resume. (Note: The board decided on Oct. 10 to shorten the break to 15 minutes.)

The door fee at the November meeting, a special concert by world-class accordionists Stas Venglevski & Mike Alongi, will be \$5 for members, \$10 for guests. This will enable us to cover the cost of having these renowned musicians play for us.



Ron Borelli was the MC for the evening

Lou then called for volunteers. We need more people to help at the door, collecting door fees, making out nametags and other related tasks. We also need help with handling items that need to be brought to meetings, such as nibbles for the beginning of the meetings and the break, BAAC T-shirts, lists, CD's for sale, flyers, etc. We need one or more people to line up players for the meetings, since Steve Albini is no longer able to do it. We also need someone to handle publicity and promotion of the club. Health problems of some of those who were doing these tasks have brought about the sudden shortage of help. None of these tasks is hard work. Just a little work by many people would help enormously to keep things running smoothly. *Jim Firpo was so wonderful at doing so many things that his recent health problems have left a huge gap. Jim is doing better, but he's still not completely well and we ask that all members pray for his complete recovery.*



Harry Gay & Don Garibaldi of the Good Time Accordion Club

We'd love to have his fellowship and joyful presence back with us more than anything else.]

He then presented Ron Borelli as MC for the evening. Ron started off by telling about a jam session that Dick Contino invited him to join, in a hotel room, with 30 people crammed into the room. He said Dick Contino is a real gentleman and a joy to jam with. One of our special guests this evening, Harry Gay, was also part of that jam session.

Now, on to our featured musicians for the evening, Harry Gay and Don Garibaldi of the Good Time Accordion Club in Escalon: Harry and Don were playing buddies many years ago, then didn't see each other or play for 20 years. Then they got back together again, and now, to everyone's delight, they are a playing duo.

Tonight they played so many wonderful pieces, I'm not sure I got all the names. They included a piece Harry's dad learned as a boy, translating from Italian into "Hooray, Hooray"; a Swiss Landler (3/4 time) with a driving rhythm typical of the Swiss; a medley consisting of *Arrivederci Roma*, *Solo Tu*, *Spanish Eyes*, & *Una Vez, Nada Mas* (You Belong to My Heart). Frank Montoro and I know the Spanish words to the latter and we couldn't resist singing along! Then they played another medley, this one a medley of *La Compagnola* and *Clarinet Polka*. Next was *Bionda*, a beautiful Italian piece in waltz time that included a vocal by Harry. Harry told of a large party of accordionists in Temecula recently, where some Scottish music was played. He noted that you can get that Scottish sound by playing in C while holding down a G note. I'm going to try it—it sounds intriguing, and I love the sound of Scottish music. Next the two of them played *Meditation*, a bossa nova played with a rumba beat, great for dancing. Following that they played

October Festing BAAC Style *continued*

a medley of waltzes that included *O Marie*, *Vieni Su* and *Il Sirio*. The next medley consisted of *Volare* and, *Ciao Ciao Bambino*, followed by a beautiful *Waltz Allegro* by Piazzolla.

Then came a samba medley of *Quando, Quando, Quando* & *El Cumbanchero*, followed by a polka medley of *Pennsylvania Polka* (with bellow shake by Harry) & *The Jolly Wife* (Slovenian); a tango Favorite, *La Cumparsita*; a Louis Prima medley of *Just a Gigolo* & *I Ain't Got Nobody*; *Giulietta Polka*, with a fast polka beat and a very pretty minor section in the middle; another Italian polka with audience participation: *Tic-Toc Polka*, where the audience, on cue, sang "La-la-la" for Italian, "Ja-ja-ja" for German and "Oui-Oui-Oui" for French in the chorus. Then, following a very precise rendition of *Flight of the Angels*, Harry spoke again to the audience. He said his mission is to spread the joy of the accordion and keep it alive. He has music to give away to help in his mission. He pointed out that we can't all play like Peter Soave or Charles Magnante, and we do not need to aspire to their level. All we need to do is play, at whatever level we play, and spread the joy.

Well, Harry Gay & Don Garibaldi really live up to this mission. Their style is smooth and mellow, and they manage to stay together, even with fast arpeggios and runs. Amazing! They played my favorite music styles and I loved every minute of it.

Then Lou Soper got up and said one way he promotes the accordion is to wear his accordion onto the plane when he flies somewhere. Then Clyde Forsman got up and said that's what he does, and people love it. He charmed a 3-year-old boy with his accordion, and a flight attendant even gave him a bottle of wine. Ron Borelli told about a *Those Darn Accordions!* trip to Milwaukee where the members played and people danced in the aisle.

Congratulations to Chuck Vercelli, who won the drawing.

Although Harry and Don were a tough act to follow, we were still in for some awesome entertainment. Borrowing Harry & Don's Excelsior accordions, we heard some fabulous music



Don Nurisso and Bart Beninco using the same two Excelsiors

played by Steve Balich (a Yankovick polka, *Tango of the Roses*, and *La Monforina Polka*); Mike Zampiceni *Flying Butterfly*, a John Pezzolo composition, and then, after adjusting the accordion straps, some Spanish tunes: *Ela Cumbanchero* and *Cumana*, Espana Cani including some bellow shakes, and, on request, Brazil—after starting it out in 2 keys: C and B simultaneously (ouch!). He said he has also been known to play *Lady of Spain* that way and call it *Lady of Pain*.

Bart Beninco & Don Nurisso, using the same two Excelsiors, played some duets, including *Roman Guitar* (Tango), *La Piccinina*, & *Lena Mazurka*. Bart played lead and Don showed extraordinary ability in improvising the second part.

For the grand finale, Ron Borelli picked up one of the Excelsiors and wowed everyone with *Bella Bimba*, using high bass switch for a very pleasant special sound; *Fascination* in smooth jazz style with awesome chords; *Moon River*, segueing into a French waltz in minor key, then back to the *Bella Bimba* theme—a very clever [stunning] medley. Ron ended with *Besame Mucho* and *Meglio Stasera*, and everyone went crazy. What a finale!

With that, Lou closed the meeting at 10:00 PM and everyone enjoyed delicious snacks.

Carmine Coppola's Accordion Concerto

by Paul A. Magistretti

The recently rediscovered Accordion Concerto by Academy Award Winning composer Carmine Coppola will be performed by Peter Soave & the Emerald Sinfonietta, Maestro Felix Resnick, conductor, on Sunday, October 22. The season's opening concert will be followed by a CD Release Party at the Ambleside Art Gallery. The name of the new recording is *Homegrown: A Salute to 20th Century American Composers!*

Prior to the concert the *Accordion Concerto* was recorded on September 18, 2000. The composition truly represents a major breakthrough for accordionists in the symphonic world. Coppola's wonderful Concerto was written in 1973 and has been overlooked until Maestro Resnick's and Mr. Soave's redis-

covery of it and their initiation of this project. Critics have already proclaimed the piece a gem and a major celebration of the accordion by an important 20th Century composer, truly "a gift for the Accordion".

Immediately following the Grosse Pointe performance, Mr. Soave embarks on a European concert tour in which he will perform: 3 concerts in 3 countries on 3 days: 1) October 26, Bucharest, Romania with The Romanian Philharmonic performing the world premier of Aldemaro Romero's *Piazzollana: Concerto For Bandoneon*; 2) October 27, Nova Gorica, Slovenia in performance with The Rucner String Quartet; 3) October 28, Zagreb, Croatia with The Rucner Quartet. The tour ends on November 3 with Soave performing in Italy at Villa Borromeo Senago (near Milan) in a star studded concert featuring the Romanian Philharmonic and the famous Italian singer/actress Milva. The program will feature symphonic works of Aldemaro Romero and Astor Piazzolla.

GALLA-RINI CONCERTO

by Editor John Gerstner

Galla-Rini's Concerto in G Minor is being sponsored by the Detroit Conservatory of Music (with the help of Lari Holzhauer); the Detroit Conservatory is the first accredited music school in the country to recognize the accordion as a major instrument and issue diplomas upon completion of required studies comparable to those for pianists.

Galla-Rini has justly earned the title of *The Worlds Foremost Concert Accordionist*. He has done much [to further the accordion] through his artistry, concerts, transcriptions, arrangement and compositions. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut and at the age of six began his studies. He mastered more than twenty instruments with a thorough knowledge of theory, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration and composing. He is well qualified to write a Concerto.

Of all of the instruments he studied, the accordion was always his favorite and he chose it as his primary medium. [Since] 1939 he has given concerts throughout the United States and Canada. He is also under contract to several major movie companies, and is heard on the sound tracks of such films as *The Razor's Edge*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *My Darling Clementine*, *Mrs. Skeffington*. He also appeared in several.

Galla-Rini's Performance

Before a jam-packed-full audience of music lovers and despite rain and sleet on March 6, the Detroit Symphony with Galla-Rini as guest soloist played his Concerto in G Minor with full orchestra.

We give you the opinion of J. Dorsey Callaghan, Music Critic for the Detroit Free Press:

The Concerto, employing an instrument that heretofore has had but little recognition outside its own group of enthusiasts is a completely sincere effort in the direction of raising the accordion to the status of a symphonic instrument.

The finale was an excellently well thought out section, with lilting airs of a distinctly Neapolitan cast. The orchestral parts lay to some degree in the classical mold, using strings and woodwinds. The powerful voice of the solo instrument

tended to dominate in ensemble with the orchestra. Galla-Rini is an admitted master of the accordion. The instrument, in his hands, brought forth a color range that was amazingly full.

Rehearsal Notes

The Orchestra was rehearsing for their strenuous southern tour, so only a half hour was allotted for Galla-Rini's concerto. The members later said the concerto was the toughest that had been put up before them for a long time. At the conclusion of the first movement during the rehearsal, the entire

orchestra applauded Galla-Rini and gave him a bigger hand when they finished the rehearsal. Walter Poole, the assistant conductor, who is very popular in Detroit, handled the rehearsal as he also did the concert. Dr. Karl Krueger, the conductor, was present during most of the rehearsal and later met Galla-Rini and com-

plimented him on his fine work—both in playing and composing. He seemed quite impressed and Lari Holzhauer told him she hoped he would consider using the accordion on the regular Symphony programs. Galla-Rini did not use amplification during his performance.

The Concert

Galla-Rini was given an ovation as he appeared on the stage, also great applause greeted each movement of the Concerto and a tremendous ovation him at the end. He did four encores and the audience clamored for more.

The orchestra members all seemed impressed and watched carefully as Galla-Rini was playing encores. They later said their opinion of the accordion had been considerably changed. Many thought certain selections sounded better on the accordion than on the piano. Others compared Galla-Rini's Concerto with Rachmaninoff, Berlioz and others; they were particularly impressed by the melodic lines.

Galla-Rini was in top form and did a super job. The accordion blended beautifully with the other instruments plainly dominated the music—there was only one spot where the orchestra overpowered it.

This article, presumably by editor John Gerstner is excerpted/edited from the February 1948 ff issues of Accordion World (New York) and downloaded from The Classical Free Reed Website for which BAAC PAGE expresses its thanks. We thought it was interesting to reprint due to the announcement by Peter Soave of his discovery/performance/CD of Carmine Coppola's superb Accordion Concerto. Mr. Coppola was a one-time member of the Detroit Symphony (before moving on to NYC and Toscanini); in fact, his famous son Francis Ford Coppola was born in Detroit and we wonder if Carmine was present in the Orchestra when Galla-Rini performed, later being inspired (1973) to write his own.

COTATI CAULDRON

Editor's note: The item about Cotati in the September issue prompted Clifton Buck-Kauffman, Boaz & Judith Rubin, Marian Kelly and Barb Truax to respond. Mr. Buck-Kauffman asked that his two letters not be reprinted, but the others agreed. Let me explain how the summary/survey came about. A call for opinions about Cotati was made at the start of our September meeting without my prior knowledge or participation. Subsequently, attending members wrote down their responses and/or told me what they thought. The written responses weren't signed and I listened to the content of what was said without keeping a list of names. In preparing the newsletter it seemed like it was my responsibility to summarize the material as part of the club's order of business—members in attendance were asked and responded; it happened.

Not signing the article wasn't intended to be devious or cowardly—hopefully it wasn't a symptom of mental illness as has been alleged. Anything unsigned was obviously written by the editor—there's a staff of one. Other items in the past have been unsigned. I didn't think of the Cotati piece as an editorial (as the Rubins' letter says); so, I feel some of their remarks aimed at the editor are misapplied. If it was an editorial, however, then asking for a balanced point of view isn't usually what editorials do. Anyway, I'm glad to have the Rubins' and the other letters. As for the suggestion that I not publish the opinions; that didn't seem right after they were solicited in an open meeting. A call was made to eighty people and they answered, I ought publish the results without any other agenda. Members who weren't in attendance naturally weren't asked—like Barb, Boaz and Marian, so it wasn't call that was made to the entire membership; it was just a request of those present to say what they thought. Why the request was made, I have no idea. I wouldn't have thought on my own to bring it up, but it was the business of the club that night—and there you are. Well consider this, Cotati has its say every year by virtue of the show that gets produced. Many people, as the letter writers point out, think it's wonderful. However, every public presentation is open to review and what I think was written down and told to me on the occasion of the September meeting was a collective review. The enclosed letters have another opinion—Siskel and Ebert didn't always agree. I didn't consider the material proprietary so I didn't sign, but I wasn't going anywhere and it's okay to blame me. This time around I may express myself but I'll be sure to sign and maybe reclaim (or not) some of my ethics and mental health. I have attended every Cotati Festival (both days) without missing since the beginning and maybe I have the right to an opinion; on the other hand, my severest critics know nothing about me as a person.

E-mail from Marian Kelly:

Dear Paul:

I read the anonymous article about the Cotati Festival in last month's newsletter with shock, dismay, disbelief, and then anger. I was unable to find in it a single positive comment about the only successful Accordion Festival in the country, one which has done a phenomenal job at increasing interest in the accordion in California, in the US as well as internationally. The bylaws of our Bay Area Accordion Club state forcefully

that our (only) purpose is to promote the accordion beyond our own membership; I can only wish we were a fraction as successful at achieving that goal as the Cotati Festival has been.

The article is full of false assumptions, conclusions jumped to without knowledge of the facts and amazingly self-serving statements, and I fail to understand what could possibly be gained by publishing such a hateful, biased diatribe.

For the first four years of the Festival, I was the representative to the planning committee from the Bay Area Accordion Club. I'm well acquainted with Clifton Buck-Kauffman & Rebecca Browne, both of whom have given months of their lives every year to the Festival. I know the history of the Festival well enough (because I was there) to state forcefully that, contrary to the unquestioning statement in the article, Jim Boggio was not "marginalized". I know that the purpose of the Festival has always been to promote the City of Cotati as well as the accordion by the annual Festival promotional spots and by donating any profits to the music program in the Cotati schools. There have not always been profits, by the way, but Clifton simply took care of it.

I find the criticisms of the performers at Cotati particularly strange. It makes sense to me that, to be successful, the Festival must draw a far larger audience than just us accordion buffs. And that the larger audience is likely to respond more positively to acts which are "entertaining" as compared to the acts which feature accordion artists who don't focus on pleasing a crowd. Clifton & Rebecca have been running a business, folks. They aren't there only to please us. Their business attracts 8,000 to 10,000 people in a weekend—people who enjoy listening to the sounds of the accordion, either solo or in groups, people who go away feeling much more positive about our instrument than when they came. They're doing what works. And we & our instrument benefit tremendously because of what they are doing.

Any one of you is welcome to hold individual opinions about what kind of accordion music you prefer. But if you care about the instrument please recognize that we have a job to do in reeducating the American public to love the accordion as we do. And recognize that not everyone who values our instrument will agree with our personal musical choices; indeed, that wonderful potential for musical variety is what makes the accordion so fascinating. Younger players are finding their own ways to enjoy the accordion and I strongly urge you to be more tolerant of their choices! If one reads your editorial carefully, one can extract some meaningful points about how the program might strike a better balance in (the) future between solo acts, ensemble acts and satirical acts. But the constructive points are hard to find among the dominant negative tone and the subjective barbs that express resentment about the financial success of the festival, cast doubt on the intentions and actions of its organizers and hint that certain accordionists are not "legitimate". Quoting directly from your editorial: "the Festival didn't believe it had any responsibility to educate and inform,

continued on next page

Cotati *continued*

I'm afraid this negative, judgmental article has hurt the Festival. We owe Clifton Buck-Kauffman not only a debt of gratitude but also a sincere apology. If any of you wishes to discuss any details or specifics of this issue with me, please call me.

E-mail from Barb Truax

Dear Members:

I was appalled at the most recent BAAC PAGE. For the second time in recent months, pot shots were taken at Dick Contino in a paper that goes to members all over. It is rude and completely uncalled for, as well as ethically unprofessional.

First, the shot that his sound equipment was bad (which still did not need to be discussed in this paper) and now, since that was not a problem and his shows were some of his best at Cotati, you must make personal snide *remarks* at a truly great artist and performer. Where did this consensus come from—I certainly was not contacted nor were my friends, and I can guarantee that I heard nothing but delight from all the people around me during those concerts. Of course he repeats (and so do the rest of us if we play more than 15 minutes), but he also had a number of pieces I had not heard him perform before, and, who cares anyway??? I'd be disappointed if he didn't repeat certain numbers at each show. Love the new ones but appreciate the old ones just as much. No, he is not a classical or jazz concert performer, and yet he can play that also. He's an artist who has made his living playing the accordion, and exposing the instrument in all its glory to thousands of people, for which we should be thrilled, but instead he gets barbs about his playing. His one prop of the program (taking off his coat) is his only prop. The accordion is NOT a prop. It's beautifully displayed for all to enjoy.

I can agree about too much music where [the] accordion seems to get lost, but again, it presents the instrument to the youth who thought it was only good for polkas or "old people's music." I would not have attended this year had Dick not been performing. I would enjoy hearing more duets, trios, etc. from our own people, but to downgrade Contino is unbelievable. It smells very much of pure professional AND personal jealousy. Which of our members could do the same for 45 minutes; which of them would spend an hour a day on a Stairmaster and 30 minutes lifting weights?? At 70, which of our members has the stamina to perform like he does, including bellow shakes, singing, etc. I enjoy our classical artists, but they can never do for the accordion what Dick Contino has done, and for that matter, Lawrence Welk and Myron Floren. Can't we find enough to discuss without this kind of mud slinging. Frankly, I think Contino deserves an apology for both editorials. I realize Don [Dick Schiller] wrote the article but I'm sure he had help. In other words, do we really want to promote the accordion, or is this just another club??

A letter from Boaz & Judith Rubin:

Dear Editor:

This is a very sour opinion piece that gets more sour as it goes along, and it fails to note all the great and positive things

about the Cotati Accordion Festival, which over the course of 10 years has brought thousands of people together in celebration of the accordion. Its simple existence is a priceless gift to the accordion community.

Clifton Buck-Kauffman deserves accolades for creating this festival, for working hard every year to make its programming diverse and interesting and for his outreach to the accordion community. There are many different entities the festival has to deal with, and each has its own interests. Bands, individual musicians, music promoters, accordion-related businesses, clubs, associations, etc. all look to Cotati Accordion Festival to help them further their goals. Clifton and his staff work with and serve all of them through the festival, the ultimate goal of which is to bring accordion music to the public, providing entertainment while increasing awareness and appreciation of the instrument. And it is a benevolent entity. Every year the festival program includes education workshops on the accordion, and as a nonprofit, the festival donates substantial funds to the local community.

The editorial criticized the festival's recent emphasis on ensembles, referring to them as "large noisy groups in which the accordion was incidental". But it is the BAAC newsletter that occasionally reminds us that the accordion is the most popular instrument in the world. The Cotati Accordion Festival brings this truth home with a wonderfully diverse selection of music from around the globe, demonstrating some of the many ways the accordion is used—as a solo instrument and as an ensemble instrument, sometimes a major player and sometimes less so. At Cotati 2000, we heard the accordion used to play Middle Eastern, Zydeco, Tango, Latin American, Klezmer, Polka and a host of other styles of music. It was a fascinating, international celebration of the instrument and its versatility. It brought many vital, young new acts to new audiences while also giving a place of honor to more established players. The program had obvious appeal to many different age groups, including younger people, who represent the future of the accordion.

Jim Boggio was memorialized by the Cotati Accordion Festival two years ago with a poster and a statue in his honor. But your editorial includes the statement, "Some said the festival lost its soul when Boggio was marginalized..." This hints at some kind of unpleasant relationship without giving any further information. Undoubtedly there is a small group of people who know what this refers to—the rest of us do not. It smacks of unfounded accusation and is potentially damaging to the reputation of the festival. The Cotati Accordion Festival is a work in progress. It is not perfect, and can benefit from constructive criticism about its programming & operations. just make money...betraying the accordion by playing to the public's pervasive low opinion...lacks conviction that the accordion is an important instrument...legitimate accordion artists finding less of a place at Cotati...we should start a new festival...being honest in our intentions and purpose—maybe make an honest dollar." This last seems to suggest that Cotati does not come by its own dollars honestly.

continued on next page

Cotati continued

Clifton Buck-Kauffman and the organizers of the Cotati Accordion Festival deserve better than this, and we think BAAC owes them an apology. Sincerely, Boaz & Judith Rubin, Boaz Accordions, Member of BAAC & Proud sponsor of the Cotati Accordion Festival cc. Clifton Buck-Kauffman.

At the October meeting & after:

Editor's note: Two people criticized the negative comments about Cotati. Someone said Dick Contino was a wonderful person—we all agreed. One member said negative comments in general weren't good, but he hadn't attended Cotati. Everyone agreed that fewer BAAC members attended (the jam tent was used less). Most who spoke said that what they saw published was the opinion they held.

It should be obvious that a club of specialists like BAAC would have more critical opinions than the general public. The idea that I should have suppressed the members' opinions isn't right in a free society. Strong criticism of Cotati existed, so where should it be aired except in our newsletter—or should the disgruntled members take it to the media? I think these matters are better discussed among ourselves—a gag-order isn't the answer. So many people had negative feelings that it seemed newsworthy and maybe even important for the producers to know. C. G. Jung said that what people believe constitutes psychic truth and you have to deal with it. I thought the summary might be like a gasping canary in a mineshaft, in which case the producers ought to ponder the sound of wheezing, rather than silence.

I don't think there was purposeful attack against Dick Contino; rather, he is such a star that he tends to define the instrument in his own terms—he's a fine artist, a showman and a man with a large, loyal following. I don't think there is jealousy about his success so much as a feeling that he performs at so many festivals as well as Reno and Las Vegas that perhaps Cotati was becoming just another stop. The public is well aware that Dick Contino = accordion, that Myron Floren = accordion, that polka = accordion; that's just great. I'm not sure showing people what they already know promotes a full appreciation of the instrument, which is what seems to be lacking in the world. Barb said she only went to Cotati to see Contino—which speaks volumes of her opinion (I think) about the Cotati Festival. I appreciate that she defends Mr. Contino, but I don't think Dick was hurt by what was said in BAAC's tiny newsletter after he's had a 50 year career of fame and fortune in the cruel world of show biz. Marian sees the Festival as a business. Of course, but the views I

summarized seemed to reflect the idea that a lot of people thought it was supposed to be more than that and that it was settling for being another summer fair—which is fine, but don't be surprised if BAAC members complain. For example, does Cotati push the envelope of what the instrument can do? Members wondered, where were artists like Lips, Semynov, Soave, Schimmel, Klucsevsek, Rossi, Venglevski, Alongi, Ahveneinen, Van Damme, Faukstad, Morini, Hussong, Jacobs, Galliano, Jobard, Nasturica, Shang, Zubitsky, Fanucchi, Ohlendorf, Doktorski, Petric, Draugsvoll, Farnen, Sundqvist, Marocco and a hundred more, all talented, rarely heard and usually underpaid artists who haven't celebrity. Isn't the paucity of recognition for hundreds of virtuosi and geniuses of the instrument something we should try to correct? Galla-Rini opened the door as a soloist with the Detroit Symphony in 1948. Peter Soave and artists of his caliber are very rarely hired 52 years later. When will the neglect of our great artists be addressed? Where will it be addressed? Some people thought Cotati might be a starting point where terrible inequities could be torn down—ten years ago it started out that way with Galla-Rini himself appearing. Cotati seemed to promise something important. I think the negative criticism reflected a growing sense of disillusionment and the fact that this year, at the dawn of a new century, Cotati had (once again) turned to great charm and appeal of Mr. Contino (wonderful artist and gentlemen that he is) and hadn't extended itself towards any of the neglected, overlooked & fabulous artists of the instrument who seem destined to remain unknown and underrated for another hundred years beneath the dust of pop culture and a bottom line mentality. Maybe trying to promote the astounding gifts of accordion artists—people with talent equal to world-renowned stars like Perlman, Horowitz, Yo-Yo Ma, etc.—doesn't pay off in the short run. But that's tautological: if their talents were already commercial entities, they wouldn't need recognition and everyone would already know who they were and that there existed accordion artists who play Bach and Basie as well as anyone plays them on any instrument. Where do our great artists perform who are not pop, ethnic or polka performers, genres well integrated in the mass mind with the accordion? Is it such a big promotion of the accordion to round up the usual suspects, do the expected and call it a festival? Should young people never hear Bach, because most of them may not like it? Are we never the opinion of the members, the Board, or SFBAAC. It's an editorial..

(signed) Paul Magistretti

BAAC BOARD INFO

As of the end of September our total bank balance was just over \$7,600. Dues are now coming in. Frank Schlotter has agreed to be club Historian. He came to the meeting to discuss some of his ideas for chronicling the club's history, past, present and future. The board confirmed Joe Smiell for the Vice President slot, from which Steve Albini had to resign because of an overload of commitments. The club is going to rent a storage space near the meeting hall to store club property such as sound system, canopy (booth), and other items that are now scattered around in various homes. The board voted to shorten the break at general meetings from 30 minutes to 15 minutes. The BAAC stage sign is missing, and we need to ask the membership if anyone knows its whereabouts. BAAC has a few accordions available for loan to students—some 12 bass; some 120 bass. Call Val (510) 531-4836.

MENO BARBA, PIU VOCE

by Paul A. Magistretti

Friedrich Lips is certainly one of the world's finest bayan artists. His performances, books on theory (*The Art of Playing the Bayan*), transcriptions (Bach's *Chaconne*, etc.) and pedagogical skills at Gnesin Institute have proven his talent. While listening to two of his CDs, *De profundis* and *Et exspecto* (both titled for pieces by Sofia Gubaidulina which are the highlights of these two anthologies) I thought about the voice of the accordion. Voice can mean the primal tone of the instrument, how it projects, the emotional impact, it's acoustic and recorded effects and other things. But follow the Mellow Brick Road, if you will.

In listening to these two albums and having heard Mr. Lips play the program he essentially presents on *De profundis* in person, I've come to some conclusions. On records Lips chooses to present himself on most selections (particularly Bach) as an organist; that is, the tonal image of the instrument, his use of reverb and the sheer size and power of the playing as projected by electronic means are intended to support that idea. For example, listening to Bach's *Toccata* and *Fugue in D Minor* on the *Et exspecto* album I often found myself imagining E. Power Biggs before the manuals of a pipe monster in a cathedral—a listener who didn't know it was a bayan would mistake it. I ran a test and no one guessed it was an accordion. And Lips isn't alone in taking a Phantom of the Organ approach. I've found a majority of accordionists, especially classical accordionists, doing the same thing—reverb, big sound and a sprinkling of organ dust. In Jazz, the trend tends towards a dry tone (single bassoon reed) and the mystique of woodwinds. Is tonal hide-and-seek a good thing? And what does that say about the accordion?

It seemed significant that Lips aspired to an illusory organ on most of his selections. He didn't attempt any such magic when I saw him in concert. I can only say he (or his sound engineer) made a conscious choice to slip into the ranks of an established field beyond the question of instruments. It's certainly a way to make people hear the music and the artist and not the true voice of the instrument. But such a sidestep defers the matter of the accordion's own voice and fails to firmly establish it in the public's consciousness. I find this kind of sleight of sonority on far too many accordion recordings. One rare exception is the pure natural sound on Øivind Farnen's CD *Baroque*. But few people seem to understand how an accordion should sound and so its voice gets tossed into audio limbo.

With its various switches and the many fatal ways it's presented and recorded the accordion often seems like an aural octopus. I don't think there's another instrument whose sound

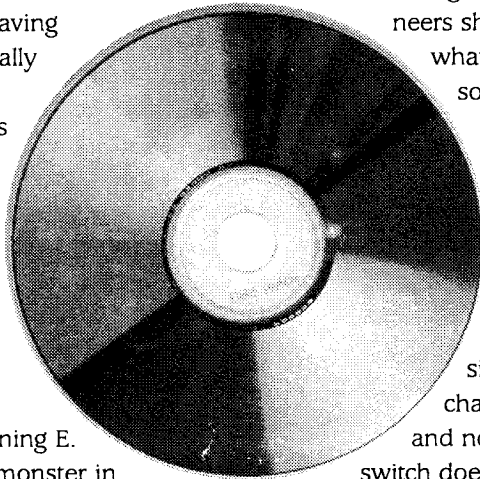
is so different from place to place and record to record due to the desire to define the accordion as something else.

Diversity has advantages, but if an instrument has a thousand faces it can end up with none. Everyone has a listening preference—certain timbres and tonalities affect us differently and there are definite lovers of pianos, oboes, harps, etc. If an accordion aspires to sound “like” an organ or “like” a clarinet, it can get lost in likenesses—some people may even cruelly say it's a lousy organ or a poor clarinet. Identity rests on the fact that first and foremost an instrument must sound like itself and nothing else. I think performers and sound engineers should know, love and understand exactly what the accordion is and how it naturally sounds.

I've often heard a player within the space of a single piece use multiple switches (*registri* in Italian). The reason usually seems vague—at most, it's a leap from solo to tutti (master switch). I feel most of the time the effect only tosses in unneeded tonalities. Even if someone considered an accordion a chamber orchestra, chamber groups strive for a consistent sound and not a collection of parts. While hitting a switch doesn't dramatically change the tone it can muddy the voice. Listeners who were involved in the music can be jarred by a mechanical intrusion; it can seem like breath of fresh clutter. Sometimes, I think performers hit switches because they're there. Other times, I think they're bored and want to arbitrarily pump up the sound—which may condemn their playing or comment negatively on the accordion's voice. I'm acquainted with accordionists (talented ones) with ten accordions or more. Such a collection suggests they may be unhappy with the sound of all of them. But there's a further question. Even if the use of switches is de-emphasized (though the manufacturing trend seems to be in the opposite direction) what about considering the nature and quality of the accordion's primal voice itself?

Violinists don't flip switches; however, the instrument's different strings permit both tonal range and a variation of timbre without ever confusing us about its identity. The instrument has a voice that's clear, defined and unmistakably ingrained in our conscious and unconscious minds and hearts. Organs have switches, but even ballgame and theater organists, don't pop a stop every few bars; such changes would tear the music apart if not sucker punch feeling and meaning. Other than pure physical sound and tonal range an instrument has to have a well developed and emotionally laden voice—out of which emerges a psycho-emotional identity.

Some variants of the mainstream accordion have distinctive voices (and often no switches). The Slavonic button box (and



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Meno Barba, Piu Voce *continued*

its variants) is never mistaken for anything else and would never aspire to be anything else. Small diatonic accordions are well defined. Of the more sophisticated instruments, the bandoneon is unmistakable and Astor Piazzolla wove that instrument into a cognitive force of free reed sound. The bandoneon's unmistakable identity is just the kind of *piu voce* I think is needed in the rest of the accordion world.

Beyond the genius of Piazzolla's compositions (now tackled on just about every instrument), the bandoneon sound perfectly expressed the music—and that one-two combination defined a voice, which has taken its place in the world's consciousness as definitively as Bach and organs. The Piazzolla groundswell is so strong that classic & pop artists of all instrumental persuasions have produced renditions—and not just for commercial reasons; they have been emotionally motivated. Such an expansive phenomenon hadn't happened before with free reed instruments. We've had pop hits, but the tunes remained in the domain of their creators—wonderful artists like the Harmonicats or Tony Lovello. But the bandoneon's emergence has been like a new vocalist appearing on the world stage—a Caruso, or Cecilia Bartoli. What commends singers to people's aesthetic sense is their unmistakable vocal identity. The bandoneon spoke to one and all (with Piazzolla's genius) and announced it had *voce*, a highly charged, instantly identifiable and emotionally laden sound. The elements were simple: octave reeds, percussive attack, plaintive tones from stressed reeds that almost bent their pitch and resonance conditioned by a long, square bellows. When I saw the movie *Il Postino* and heard the first few notes of the poignant theme that dominated the film, my reaction was that I was hearing one of the most plaintive accordions ever. After two bars I knew it was a bandoneon; the instrument has voice.

Peter Soave, who recently included the bandoneon among the instruments he's mastered, commented that he feels a stronger more flexible solo voice with it. He said he felt the bandoneon had sharper emotional impact—even if it had less range and repertoire than a bayan. He doesn't undervalue the bayan's beauty, flexibility and facility; he just felt an additional level of expressiveness with the simpler, more pliant instrument—i.e., more *voce* at his command.

There are millions of beautiful sounding accordions—and I love their sound. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with the accordion. Øivind Farnen's Zero Sette (aka Petosa) is beautiful,

Peter Soave's Pigiini Mythos is wonderful; Henry Doktorski has a lovely Victoria—perhaps the finest bayan I've heard is Veikko Ahvonen's instrument, the last one made by the great instrument maker, Yun Volkovich (1927-1981). There are thousands and thousands of wonderful Giulietti's, Bugaris, Bells, Colombos, Excelsiors—I yield to no one in my love of the sound of a good accordion in the right acoustic situation. The question is not the beauty of the sound as it is now, or the excellence of what the instrument does, but whether we can take the accordion's voice to the next level, similar to how it's been developed mechanically. And at the same time we must be sure our aesthetic attentiveness always optimizes the accordion's natural voice as we now have it—never obscuring, hiding or poorly displaying it. So, is there some way we can improve the distinctiveness of the accordion's voice and give it a clarion call that will stir human emotions even more upon contact? Can we give our great artists (who are second to none) an instrument that will let their genius, passion and spirit soar even higher? The cello, for example, would be sonically dead if it wasn't discovered that when a wooden peg is inserted inside and wedged against the front and back the instrument's sound soars. Peg in place the instrument spreads a rumbling, heart-breaking melancholy throughout the world as a defining, primal voice. If a simple peg can be the sonic soul of the cello is there some undiscovered *colpa dell'alma* (stroke of soul) for the accordion?

On the Lips CDs when I listened to the two Gubaidulina pieces, which are excellent *avante garde* compositions, I felt good—the music was composed with the instrument (and Lips) in mind taking full advantage of an air release valve, bellows shakes, complicated cadenzas, tone clusters and glissandi. Gubaidulina's composing for the instrument's strengths meant there is no mistaking it—only a bayan could do such things so well. Lips performs everything beautifully and the recorded sound (on these two pieces) keeps down the reverb, emphasizing the accordion-ness of the voice. All that said—and taking into account the instrument's great range—a clarion-like voice doesn't emerge comparable to bandoneon. There is still too much breathy generality—and the recording technique doesn't help.

Apart from the primal voice itself, there's a need to enhance expressive control and shading. Take singers—we instantly recognize Ella; then
continued on next page

there's what she does with her voice. So, we not only need a defining sound for the accordion, we need the means to control, modify and make that sound our own. The piano developed its voice (gradually over centuries), and its mechanical facility got to the point where a listener could tell Glenn Gould from Horowitz through how they expressively transcended the instrument and made its voice their own. The bandoneon seems to permit some expressive latitude with its voice on several levels: simplicity of design and a lack of weight make it easy to manipulate; the long, square bellows maximizes expression when played on the draw, *i.e.*, there's gravity-aided control; there may be a sonic effect from air being pulled into an ever expanding chamber; the player can use leg action to accent an attack (almost like tonguing a woodwind, an effect not comparable to the bellows-shake). These simple playing manipulations and the instrument's primitive, direct response tend to give it added expressive dimensions.

On Lips' *De profundis* CD, Mr. Lips does a Piazzolla piece (Sentido Unico) and tries to emulate the bandoneon sound. He does so by having the equalization on the track finessed and it doesn't work. His bayan sounds nothing like a bandoneon even with severe EQ; the results were peculiar at best. When I heard him play Sentido Unico in person he made no attempt to sound like anything other than a bayan; I enjoyed the performance. Of course, he didn't come close to a bandoneon's voice—its attack or sustained notes. And because it is hard to ignore the expectations Piazzolla raises for free reed voices, I felt let down. Fortunately, Lips didn't repeat the Piazzolla audio fiddling on the rest of the CD and he does some fine playing—Lecuona, Granados, Albeñiz, Villa-Lobos, etc., as well as some Schedrin pieces.

I think Lips' better-defined performance of Gubaidulina's music is due to the fact that he isn't attempting to make his instrument sound like anything other than what it is—he's not playing in the shadow of Bach's organ (the *Et exspecto* CD has several wonderful Bach selections of organ-likeness), Piazzolla's bandoneon or on some of the Spanish pieces, Segovia's guitar. There is a huge lesson here. While the search for a voice may or may not go on, the beautiful one that exists must be accepted for what it is—as such, it has to be protected, projected and properly recorded. Performers have to treasure the accordion's natural voice and keep faith with it; if we don't, who will?

What may have epitomized Lips' performance of Gubaidulina's work is that an important living composer wrote for him and his instrument; that meant the music's meaning and effect were intended for his talent and instrumental voice. Thus, we get a beautiful symbiosis between his soul as an artist and his instrument, rather than the problem of transcriptions (physical and emotional) by his having to wander into other keyboard domains. Lips gets a match that happens for other instrumentalists: *i.e.*, Pablo Casals conjoined on a soul level with his cello and Bach's Unaccompanied Suites.

Gubaidulina's music is programmatic: there's a theme and mood to express and she accomplishes it powerfully. Her

vision focuses Lips' imagination with unmistakable theatricality. Such a clear overarching form isn't always so evident in his playing. Make no mistake, Gubaidulina's compositions are *avante garde*, if conservatively so, but, she never falls into the realm of theoretical sketching, abstraction, notes on a page or a self-conscious toying with means and media that diminishes emotional impact. Gubaidulina's works seem more than the sum of dissonance, stretched intervals, squeaks, globs, wheezes and the air release valve. All of those effects are there, but not as ends in themselves; she doesn't avoid keys, harmony, melody and rhythmic regularity as gimmicks. The two pieces are religious and evocative. *De profundis* is based on the psalm, "Out of the depths of my despair, Oh, Lord, I call to you"; here, she contrasts a defined chorale with sound clusters. *Et exspecto*, based on the appearance of Christ, presents the conflict between heaven and earth until the chorale emerges in tragic grandeur built upon simple chords that eventually become dissonant until everything dissolves in a whirlwind (air release). If you like this kind of music you won't find better compositions or performances—in terms of the instrument, no other could accomplish it. The *De profundis* CD (as noted) contains selections by Spanish, Brazilian, Cuban and Argentinean composers and demonstrates Lips' range. The arrangements are rich and multi-layered—Malagueña is a good example. However, when I listened the multiple sonorities seemed muddled. When I switched to a headset most of what bothered me diminished. With the headset Lips' subtle dynamics came across—and I had previously listened on two fine systems. What was the problem? As discussed above, the sheer number of reeds and different sonorities created an acoustic/recording quagmire. Just as in an orchestra different sounds cut through other sounds differently, so too accordion sounds behave differently. Even the rate of bringing a huge bass reed to its peak is slower than with a clarinet or piccolo reed. Registers can jumble things acoustically and doubly jumble them on recordings—recording devices pick up different frequencies in varying ways, so you get an electronic bias along with the bias of the physical situation (room size and acoustics). Playing Lips' CD over speakers emphasized the biased qualities of the mix and the speakers added another layer of acoustical problems by virtue of my listening space.

The tremendous complexity of sound that the accordion produces has to be understood. There is a huge range of frequencies and overtones emanating from many different reeds (4 or 5 treble and up to 7 bass) each behaving differently in an acoustic environment—each recorded differently—all the while emerging from two separate manuals. Let's ask a question: where is the absolute, audio center of an accordion's sound? This is a factor as important as the optical center of a lens. The absolutely best place to hear the focused sound of an accordion is exactly where the player is, between the left and right hands and above the instrument. That is the position in which there is the least acoustic overlay (walls, floors, etc.) and the

continued on next page

most direct access to the sounds as they emerge from the instrument in perfect stereophonic balance—this is a matter that's very important in terms of hearing the accordion's true voice. You can't just solve the problem by creating a false audio center with mikes left and right; the mix is wrong.

Accordions have two separate manuals that generate their sounds up to several feet apart, so where else would they converge except where the player is at the apex of the triangle? Careful experimentation may find an approximate audio center for recordings; the right room can help performances, but that can be a matter of luck—a small band shell behind a player can help focus the sound. In terms of the instrument as it is, how can it realize its full artistic destiny when its sound and beauty are optimized for an audience of one—and when its effectiveness can be a matter of acoustical chance? Our artists face serious considerations on a physical level that other instrumentalists never have to consider. I've witnessed this disparity of "the perfect listening position" a million times. The player is performing beautifully and hearing marvelous sounds—he/she is transfixed—on the other hand, the audience is restless and lost in a confusion of sonorities.

Often when accordionists jam together each one is thrilled and happy with what he/she hears, but what the audience hears is a wall of unfocused sound. The genius of Joe Smiell is that he understands this problem and has gone a long way towards overcoming it with the ensembles he conducts and the arrangements he writes. Most of his energy has been directed towards surmounting the isolation of a dozen talented musicians lost in

their own audio centers. What he achieves is not just the conductor's skill of bringing the parts together, but a transposition of audio separateness, and a refocusing of the sound towards the audience. To my ears Joe is one of the few people who has realized the nature of the problem and who has been able to bring some beauty and clarity out of chaos, which is why I appreciate his work. But Joe is dealing on a collective basis with a problem that every player faces individually in the matter of voice and focus—a soloist must strive to project the audio center of the two manuals to his/her listeners.

Bandoneons may somewhat change the focus of sound between the two manuals by being played on the draw; that is, pulling the sound into the bellows may create a mix between the two hands. Be that as it may, an accordion's structure needs a design that will refocus the audio center, mix the manuals and project the results towards an audience of more than one.

Well, we face a number of intriguing and complex problems in the pursuit of voice: identity, expressive control, mixing and projecting sound, the number and kinds of sonorities and the soul of the instrument. Until these problems are solved careful attention must be paid to the beautiful voice we have. We have to be knowledgeable and protective—we have to make sure *piu voce* is projected in the clearest, most focused and beautiful manner possible to an audience—they have to hear it as well as we do seated at the audio center. Furthermore, it's self-defeating to indulge in reverb, switch-omania and sounding like organs or clarinets: "To thine own self be true" is sound advice in more ways than one.

TEACH SPEAK

Each month we will be printing tips from accordion teachers & others that we hope will be of interest to our readers. We invite everyone to submit any short piece of advice.

Palpitating Your Bellows?

by Mike Zampiceni

Does your heart beat for me? Maybe not, but you may unknowingly be palpitating your bellows. Last month I spoke about bellows that may sound like they have a case of the hiccups. This month, I'll talk about bellows that sound like they may have a built-in metronome.

The purpose of the bellows is to provide air to the reeds in a dynamically expressive manner. The dynamics are compromised when extraneous motions are added, such as keeping time with the bellows. I've noticed that this occurs particularly when people are playing peppier tunes, like polkas for instance. Just as if they were keeping time with their feet, these folks give an extra tug every time they play a bass button. This is particularly noticeable when they are holding a treble note longer than a couple of beats.

You may not even realize you're doing this. I suggest you record yourself with a cassette player. Do you hear pulsations on every beat? Remember that accents only occur at certain locations, not on every beat!



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ACCORDIONS AL DENTE

by Tom Torriglia

Being a guy is not easy. For example, people automatically expect that you know a lot about American spectator sports. Well, to tell you the truth, I have no idea how to calculate a baseball player's slugging percentage nor, when it comes to football, do I know the difference between an outside linebacker and an inside linebacker. But, don't tell anyone. The other day, I asked someone what a double chamber was. This person looked at me in disbelief and said that I should know that because I'm an accordion player. Well, I didn't. Do you? Another thing I've wondered about is what's a "set of reeds." You always hear people asking how many sets of reeds does this accordion have. Some people have told me to count the number of dots on the switches. If there are three dots, the accordion has three sets of reeds. That's great, except my accordion has names written on the switches, not dots. Another person told to pull off the grill, press a key and count the number of holes under the key's pad. When I told him the number of holes, he said that that can't be right. I was recently watching Dale Wise's Accordion repair video and he states that a "set" is the reeds on one half of a reed block. So, for example, if my accordion has three reed blocks on the treble side and there are reeds on each side of the block, my accordion has six sets of reeds on the treble side. On the bass side, it is common to have one side of a reed block blank. That's why you'll hear people say the accordion has five sets of reeds. Is everyone in agreement? If not, tell me your definition of a set of reeds.

You may recall that I asked all the clubs across America to find out about getting a museum-type installation in place at

their local airport for *National Accordion Awareness Month*. Here's a snippet from the reply I received from Blake Summers at the San Francisco Airport. He writes that "all the exhibit galleries are scheduled until 2003". Wow! I knew the airport galleries were popular, but not this popular. So, I will try to get something scheduled for 2004. He also wants to know: "what the memorabilia would consist of, would it be three-dimensional objects or two-dimensional?" He also wanted to know about availability. This is where you come in. If you have a photo, accordion, figurine or other artifact that you think would be suited for an accordion exhibition, please let me know what you have. I will photograph and catalogue the items and meet with the airport people to come up with a concept of displaying the items. I bet some of you have some really cool stuff that would make the exhibition a big hit.

Here in the Bay Area, we are treated to two accordion festivals; the one in San Francisco and the one in Cotati. I think it would be great if we had festivals throughout the state: sort of a *California Accordion Festival™*. Each year, a different city would vie for the honor of bringing the *California Accordion Festival™* to its town. Kinda like they do with the Olympics. Or, maybe five festivals on successive weekends; one up in Ukiah, one in Petaluma; one in San Jose; one in Los Angeles and one in San Diego. Area clubs could co-sponsor. Let me know your thoughts. Speaking of festivals, I got a call from someone who is planning on putting on an accordion festival out in Livermore next year. I'll keep you posted. You may reach Tom at: tom@ladyofspain.com.

ON THE LOCAL SCENE

by Steve Mobia

I just came back from a concert at the San Francisco Conservatory. It was among the best I've ever heard. It was comprised of all modern works. The earliest was a Hindemith piece written in the early 20's and from his best and most experimental period. Two energetic movements surround a quiet central section for woodwinds and solo bell. The finale was quite wild and almost circus-like, climaxed by a wailing siren! Just great! Leesa Dahl played the accordion extremely well throughout, though its role was supportive and mainly for timbre rather than as the featured instrument. Leesa actually studied at the Conservatory as a pianist—so, this was the first time she played an accordion in concert, but it was great. [We might mention that she is the daughter of Gary Dahl, who is an arranger for Mel Bay Publications and has several accordion music books in print. He regularly contributes to the "squeezebox newsgroup on the web.]"

Leesa played both piano and celeste for the haunting, impressionistic Tree Line by the famous Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu. Of all the selections my personal favorite was the opening piece after intermission: Eskaintza by Basque composer Ramon Lazkano. Though the Messiaen influence was detectable, it was quite an original piece with great dissonant outbursts from the bass. It was some of the best instrumental writing I've ever heard—never a dull moment. The final piece was more conventional harmonically, though full of surprises, humor, irony and sheer beauty; it featured a young soprano at the very end; it was Giya Kancheli's Midday Prayers. Hopefully, these pieces will be recorded soon, since they were excellent and stunningly performed. It just goes to show what can be found right under our noses.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We had a very exciting musical performance this month. The volunteer players were just plain excellent. What a club. Does anybody know where our large stage sign is resting. If you know where this magnificent sign is stored please call me at 510-792-8765.

There have been some changes of officers and one board member.

Joe Smiell will now be our Vice President and Ron Borelli will replace Dominic Saso on the Board. Mike Zampicini is moving out of the Bay area so Val Keiser will temporarily be Secretary/Treasurer with the volunteer help of her husband, John. As you can see, we need someone who has bookkeeping experience to relieve Val of all this work. We also need a recording Secretary and a Communication Secretary to ease her load.

We need volunteers to help with membership listing and cards. We need help with promotion and publicity. None of these tasks require much time but we need more help so the load is shared by you members. Remember, every member owns this club and we can only be efficient with your help.

Presently we are sending introductory letters to all the cities and the Chamber of Commerce in the Bay area about BAAC and our programs. We have some 12 bass and 120 bass accordions for loan to students in our scholarship program. For information call Val Keiser at 510-531-4836.

Very important: our November 8 meeting at the Patio Español will be a dynamite show with our two guests Mike Alongi and Stas Venglevsky and the cost is \$5 for paid up members and \$10 for all guests. We will have four people at the counter for the next meeting to check your current membership, issue you a new membership card, give you a nametag and collect the admission charge. You must be wearing your nametag so we know who you are.

If you haven't paid your 2001 dues, you can pay them at the door and get your membership card at the same time. Dues are \$25 and admission is \$5. For everyone who has paid the 2001 dues, you will get a membership card, which is good until September 2001.

Frank Schlotter has volunteered to be the club historian. This is a huge undertaking and Frank could use some help in gathering material. If you have some interesting material that BAAC should know about, call Frank at 510-339-1163.

We are also renting a storage locker near the Patio Español to store all the equipment BAAC has acquired. We will need a couple of volunteers to handle this small detail. Let me know if you can help. Thanks very much.

Hope to see you the second Wednesday, November 8. Bring a friend.

— Lou Soper

Calendar of Events

November

- 5 Composition & Transposition. 2-4pm
w/ Lou Jacklich. Pre-Register: \$35.00
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429
- 8 Bay Area Accordion Club Meeting, 7 pm
Stas Venglevski & Mike Alongi to perform
Patio Espanol, 2850 Alemany Blvd. San Francisco
Info: 510.792.8765
<http://www.baaccordionclub.org>
November's meeting will be on the second Wednesday of the month.
- 12 Composition & Transposition. 2-4pm
w/ Lou Jacklich. Pre-Register: \$35.00
Boaz Accordions
Sacramento St. at 67. Berkeley, CA
Info: 510.845.1429

December

- 2 ACR Christmas Dinner Dance
Herman Sons Hall. 860 Western. Petaluma
More info to come
- 6 Bay Area Accordion Club Meeting, 7 pm
Patio Espanol, 2850 Alemany Blvd. San Francisco
Info: 510.792.8765
<http://www.baaccordionclub.org>
- 17 Northwest Accordion Festival. 11am-4pm.
(Formerly known as the Day of the Accordion)
Seattle Center House, Seattle, WA
Admission: Free. Info: 206.622.4786

Ongoing

BAAC Ensemble rehearsals are the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month
7:00 pm, Moose Lodge Daly City
Call Frank Montoro (650) 574-4757 to confirm.

(BAAC Ensemble should not be confused with ACE ensemble, which is an entirely different group, also affiliated with BAAC)

BAAC "Fun Band" rehearsals are the third Wednesday of the month, 7:00 pm,
Moose Lodge Daly City
Call Val Kieser (510) 531-4836 to confirm.

Would You Like to Join BAAC?

Send a check for \$25.00 to:

BAAC, P.O. Box 318175
San Francisco, CA 94131-8175