

BAAC PAGE

Dedicated to the accordion through fun, service & education

September 2001: Looking Back & Looking Ahead

By Valerie T. Kieser

This was the mandatory Annual Meeting at which elections are held. Lou Soper conducted the election. The candidates, all unopposed, were: President, Valerie Kieser; Vice President, Joe Smiell; Secretary, Richard Schiller; Treasurer, Bob Pisani; Board Member, Vince Cirelli, (continuing); Board Member, Jim Firpo (continuing); Board Member, Frank Schlotter.



Pursuant to the By-Laws of the Bay Area Accordion Club, a vote was taken of all members present at the meeting, and the vote among those members was unanimous in favor of the slate that was presented.

Then Lou Soper gave a recap of the year, giving special credit to all those who contributed: Paul Magistretti for our excellent newsletter; John Seckman for our equally excellent website; Jim Holliday for setting up the chairs for each meeting (and numerous other tasks all year long); Evelyn Baulch for conducting the raffle each month; Vince Cirelli and Lou Casalnuovo for working the entrance table and helping out in other ways; Jim Firpo for being willing and ready to help with anything and everything; Frances and Dominic Benedetto for their excellent personal catering services to the club (outstanding food at meetings and special events); Tom Orzechowsky and Lois Buhalis for storing all BAAC's equipment at the unbelievable rate of \$20 per month; Ed Zaro, our intrepid videographer at all the meetings; Frank Schlotter, for chronicling everything the club does and has done, as its Historian; Bob Berta, our ongoing and excellent photographer (and everything else he does); Joe Smiell, our world renowned composer and conductor, for sharing with any and all interested BAAC members his infinite knowledge and musical experience; Val Kieser for whatever needs to be done; and two people who never say no when asked to do anything: Mr. C. M. Raja of the Camera Boutique in San Francisco and Kris Nelson, President of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods; as well as innumerable other people who have contributed in smaller but important ways.

Lou mentioned that we have been very fortunate for the past two years, and hopefully well into the future, to have Patio Español as our meeting place, at a very reasonable rate for San

Francisco: \$200 for the large room. We also hold our Fun Band and Ensemble rehearsals at Moose Lodge for \$25 per evening. We have a brand new, state-of-the-art PA system thanks to generous donations by many of our members; we had two workshops this year that were free to BAAC members: one by Joe Smiell and the other by Lou Soper; we have had some world class entertainers come to play for us, including Mike Alongi and Stas Venglevski from the Midwest, Zhang Gouping from China; Tony Lovello; Jorgen Sundeqvist and Øivind Farmen from Scandinavia and the Viennese Accordion Chamber Ensemble from Austria. These were in addition to our very own, home-grown musicians and entertainers.

Bob Berta was our MC for the evening. He gave a preview of what the program for the evening was going to be—besides performers, there would be a group photo (which we would like to make an annual event) and a workshop on group playing, with Joe Smiell.

The first player on the program was one of Lou Jacklich's young students from China, Thor Miao. Thor played *España Cañi*, *Two Guitars*, and *Torna a Sorrento*. This young man is on

his way to becoming an accordion virtuoso, and you can tell from his playing style that Lou Jacklich is his teacher. Lou is known for turning good players into great ones. The only thing lacking in Thor's performance was a smile! Even though he is obviously a serious student, I would have loved to see him smile, at least at the end. Thor, I hope you'll come back and play for us again in the coming months.



Our second performer for the evening was Joe Smiell on his *Steirische Harmonika*, which we affectionately call a Button Box. Joe explained how, even though there are two notes of the



chromatic scale missing on a 4-row button box, the ear (or brain) supplies the missing notes so you don't even realize they are not there. Joe then played a *Boarischer*, which is a dance form older than the *Rheinländer* or the *Schottische*, on his E-flat button box, also known simply as a "flat box." Then he played his hauntingly beautiful piece about the bells "calling me back home," in which at one point he plays two melodies on the right hand

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(Meeting Oct. 3. Your dues are now due! Please remit)

simultaneously. Unbelievable! I've been playing button box for about 7 years now and I'll never be able to play two melodies at the same time!

Then Joe explained that three-four time has been around much longer than the waltz. Not all three-four time pieces are waltzes! One typical example is the *Ländler*, a dance with Swiss, Austrian and Bavarian origins. Some *Ländlers* are fast and others are slow, and you must play them the right speed, or risk offending someone! Then Joe started off with a fairly fast *Ländler*, switched to a polka, and then played a *Ländler* that started off slow, then sped up, and then slowed down again. Joe plays with that special lilt that makes European music come to life on the button box.

Our last entertainer of the evening was Tom Torriglia and his *Bella Ciao Trio*, featuring Mary Keydash on bass, Nova Szoka on drums, and, of course, Tom himself on accordion. Wow! They were good! Their first song was *Bella Ciao* with Tom doing the vocal; then they played their version of *O Marie* with both Mary



and Tom doing vocals—and *The Pasta Song* with Tom doing the vocal. Then they played and sang a very entertaining song called *Monica from Monaco*, and last they played *Tu Vo' Fa' L'Americano* (You want to be an American). Our young visitor from Italy, Russian-born Iunia Kallistova, was sitting next to me and singing along with the songs she knew, three in all. Tom, you and your trio did a great job, and we thank you.

During the break, Bob Berta set up the chairs for the BAAC group photo, which we hope will become an annual event. All BAAC members present, most with accordions, lined up in front of the stage. Bob set up his camera on the stage, and had two huge umbrella lights connected to his flash so the group would be evenly lighted. Bob, we want to thank you especially for doing this photo, as it required a lot of planning ahead and special equipment.

The drawing was won by Michael Sanossian, who very generously donated his proceeds back to the club. Michael, you're a treasure! Thanks so much!

The rest of the evening was devoted to a workshop by Joe Smiell. For all those who wanted to participate it was a fine lesson in group playing and listening to each other. For those who didn't participate, it was fun to just watch and follow along. He based the material on the C scale, played like a 3-part round with a moving part added that he wrote for those who like to sight-read. It sounded really nice, like a real composition, after just a few tries. One big lesson in this workshop is one that everyone needs to know—that unless you are asked to play, you must *keep your bellows closed* and remain silent, and *listen* to what the conductor is saying! Once people got this message, the workshop progressed nicely. Let's hope the message stays with everyone, because we enjoyed this workshop so much that we're hoping to make it a frequent event, say, every few months. Once you get "hooked" on real group playing (not just jamming), you hunger for more and more!

Benefit Raffle for BAAC Fun Band's Uniforms

By Frank Schlotter

The BAAC FUN BAND needs your help to get uniforms. We plan to have red vests with the BAAC logo and "Fun Band" embroidered on the back. Cool!

We will have raffle ticket sales at the BAAC meetings in October and December, and at the November dinner-dance. The drawing will be held during the December Christmas meeting.

The top three prizes, so far, are a **black, Italian-made Recanti**, 2/4 reeds, 120-bass, 41-key, light-weight accordion; a brand new, 120-bass-size (or smaller) **accordion holding stand** (imagine playing your accordion, sitting or standing, with no straps and no weight on you!), and many other items. The renovation and tuning of the accordion, the soft case and the stand are donated by **Boaz Accordions**. The accordion is donated by **Frank Schlotter**. Anyone with items to donate for this fun Band uniform benefit, please see **Sharon Walters** or **Frank Schlotter** at the meetings. Bring the items with you if you can. Thank you!

Raffle tickets are \$1 each, 6 for \$5, 13 for \$10 and, of course, multiples of \$1, \$5 and \$10. You will be putting name, address and (optional) telephone number on each ticket, so you need not be present at the drawing in December to win the accordion, case or stand.

You may buy tickets at the meetings from a band member, or by mail to: **Tickets; 1762 Indian Way; Oakland, CA 94611**, or call **Frank Schlotter at (510) 339-1163**, or e-mail Val at utkacc@value.net. Make checks payable to "BAAC" and note on the check "Fun Band."

Meanwhile, please join us in the Fun Band at any time and have yourself some **good fun!** We meet at the Moose Lodge on Mission Street in Colma at 7 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month. Please call Frank (Fun Band Manager), Sharon Walters (the Music Director) or Val to verify that we are meeting and to get directions if needed. You needn't be a great player—anyone can join in.

Sagebrush Swing A'comin'

Our star performers for the October meeting will be **Sagebrush Swing**, a duo of Western singers, one of whom is BAAC's own Barbara Ann Barnett, a very gifted accordionist. Her partner, Audrey McLaughlin, plays guitar and they will sing and yodel



better than you've ever heard before. They specialize in standard Western music (not the Garth Brooksian country stuff); think Gene Autry & Roy

Rogers—and they are just great!

Also Playing: Ed Massolo & Frank Panacci, duets; Bob Berta and his daughter (on flute). More!

Many weeks ago, we did a photo session with Barbara Ann and Audrey and my two palomino horses. Bob Berta was our photographer and Dick Schiller helped out. So, here's the gang looking very western & maybe it'll put y'all in the mood. *Valerie T. Kieser*

The squeeze box is making a comeback in the East Bay

By Rona Marech; Chronicle Staff Writer

Friday, August 24, 2001

Don't laugh: The squeeze box is back. The accordion was once manufactured en masse in more than a half-dozen factories in Oakland and San Francisco, but after World War II all the factories closed because of a shortage of cheap labor. Then, when America was hit with the guitar and a new infatuation with rock 'n' roll, the instrument plummeted in popularity. But now the accordion is enjoying a renaissance in the Bay Area, shedding its reputation as untuned, abrasive and corny. Enthusiasts young and old are taking the long-maligned instrument out of closets and garages, pumping the bellows and playing everything from sea chanteys, Big Band pop tunes and polkas to French, Balkan,

from classical to "avant-garde noise-band stuff." Two hundred people showed up each night, Smythe said.

Accordianist Tom Torriglia, the engine behind the successful 1990 drive to make the accordion the official instrument of San Francisco, recently performed at the hip Webby Awards. The organizer of the Web site awards show was instantly receptive to the idea of adding accordion music to the mix.

"Yes! Accordions!" he said she exclaimed. "Got to have accordions!"

—Boaz Accordions publishes a list of 18 accordion teachers.



Cajun, zydeco, Irish, Italian, Tex-Mex, norteña, klezmer, jazz, bluegrass, classical, folk and rock.

Consider:

—Managers of local music clubs like Berkeley stalwarts Ashkenaz and Freight & Salvage say they've noticed an increase in the number of bands that feature accordions. Four such groups—the Argentine tango band *MonTango*, *San Francisco Klezmer Experience* and Scottish bands *Old Blind Dogs* and *Burach*—played at Freight & Salvage this month, said executive director Steve Baker.

—The Bay Area is home to three (very active) accordion repair shops—a high number by most standards. Two are in the East Bay: Smythe's Accordion Center in Oakland and Boaz Accordions in Berkeley. And former factory worker Vincent Cirelli, 80, runs his 55-year-old business, Cirelli Accordion Service, in Brisbane.

—Kimric Smythe, 39, a natural tinkerer and music lover, opened his business in 1998. Rubin Boaz, 41, a former truck driver and machinist partial to klezmer music, founded Boaz Accordions in 1996. Both repair, tune and sell accordions and were trained by masters: Smythe is largely self-taught, but picked up pointers from Cirelli. Boaz held a one-year apprenticeship with Fairfax resident Gordon Piatanesi, grandson of the founder of San Francisco accordion factory Columbo & Sons. (After Columbo & Sons stopped manufacturing accordions in 1954, Piatanesi, 75, continued running the company as a servicing-and-repair business until he retired in 1994.)

—Local accordion clubs, low-key associations that meet regularly to talk accordion and to play, have mushroomed in the last 10 years. The Bay Area Accordion Club boasts 300 members. There are also clubs in the East Bay (70 members), Petaluma (200 members), Vacaville (250 members) and Escalon (200 members).

—Accordion jams and concerts abound. Boaz hosts weekly drop-in accordion lessons as well as private accordion salons. A couple of weeks ago, Smythe and the Oakland gallery-club 21Grand sponsored two evenings of accordion music ranging

—Old accordions, formerly a mainstay at garage sales, are harder to find in these squeeze-box-happy times. "Six, seven years ago, I would see them around a lot more frequently," said Aaron Seeman, 34, of Oakland who plays the accordion in his duo, *Duckmandu*. "People used to sell nice ones at yard sales for \$50. That doesn't happen much anymore." Some say that EBay and other online auction houses or warehouses also have contributed to a rise in prices and a drop in availability.

—Besieged with requests, Brisbane accordionist Big Lou, (otherwise known as Linda Seekins), decided to quit the piano and concentrate on accordion gigs. She hasn't had to play the piano in 10 years. "I get a lot of work strolling," said Big Lou who has played at parties, restaurants and once at a shoe store (a founder of *Those Dam Accordions*, she plays in several bands, including *Big Lou's Polka Casserole*).

—Eleven years ago, the inaugural Cotati Accordion Festival in Sonoma County drew a couple thousand attendees. A hefty start indeed, but now the event, which takes place 8/25/26 draws as many as 5,000 people a day, said Rebecca Browne, one of the festival founders.

As a former accordion Mecca, the Bay Area is well-positioned to lead the accordion pride movement, but in other parts of the country people are also feeling the love for their squeeze boxes. Though accordion manufacturing continues to take place almost exclusively overseas—festivals, associations, websites and online accordion groups in the USA are flourishing. Membership in the American Accordionists' Association nearly doubled to 2,000 in the last decade, said executive secretary Maddalena Belfiore.

Enthusiasts love to point out that accordions are popping up in places obvious (polka CDs) and less obvious (commercials, movies, mainstream rock music—including the band *They Might Be Giants*).

"The instrument undoubtedly is undergoing a resurgence mostly among white Americans," said Richard Ryschar, a music professor at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. He pointed out

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that others—Latinos, for example—have never neglected the instrument.

This comeback is part of a general trend, Ryschar said. Music of all kinds, including ethnic roots and folk music, has reemerged with help of record companies, the Internet and specialized groups that have found homes there. Because accordions are integral to traditional music from an array of countries mostly in Europe and Southern and Central America, they have particularly benefited from this movement.

How has the accordion shed its oddball-cousin status? Why are musicians and audiences increasingly drawn to it? To begin with, some people who fondly remember the accordion from its heyday are now retirement age and have time to noodle around on their old instruments. Their children—who ruthlessly dismissed everything they considered their parents' bag—have grown up and grown out of that mind-set. "I missed out on a lot of things, because I was so busy rejecting things that might be corny," Big Lou said.

And those in their 20s and 30s don't suffer from preconceived notions because the instrument was all but banished for so long, accordion lovers say. "To them, it's a whole new instrument," said Joe Petosa Jr., the President of Petosa Accordions in Seattle.

"It doesn't have any stigma anymore," said Allan Katz, general manager at Ashkenaz. "I think people see an accordion and think, 'Wow. Interesting instrument.'"

Musicians say they're passionate about the accordion for many of the same reasons it first became popular: It's dependable, easy to carry and maintain and—despite what those who have heard far too many creaky renditions of the old standard *Lady of Spain*," might say—it's endlessly complex.

"It's the most versatile, portable acoustic instrument on the planet," said Boaz. "It fits in anywhere, from Arabic to Chinese to Latin music. It's popular in India and all over the world. It does well in the rhythm section, and it's good with melody. It's just plain fun."

Rock musicians are introducing the accordion because they're bored with the "ubiquitous layout of a rock band," said Ryschar. "An accordion remains a great way of showing people you're not following a formula."

Plus, "they're cool-looking," said Emily Esner, Boaz's apprentice and an accordionist in the bluegrass band *Pinch Dogs*. She recently purchased a deep red, sparkly, rhinestone-studded accordion, and she wears matching red velvet shoes when she performs. The audience's first reaction is not to smirk and giggle. Those days are gone. Now the instrument might inspire grins—but they tend to be delighted, not contemptuous, smiles.

"I don't even have to play anything," Esner said. "People are like, 'Ooooh.' " You can contact Rona Marech at her E-mail address: rmarech@sfnchronicle.com.

Condolences to John Fiore

John Fiore, a long-time BAAC member has sadly reported that his wife of 48 years, Bruna, passed away after a long illness. Bruna was an absolutely wonderful person and will be missed. Our deepest sympathies go out to John.



Accordionists Bernt Andersson (Sweden), Johan Kullberg (Sweden), Jon Faulstad (Norway), Maria Kalaniemi (Finland) and Greta Sundström (Åland) toured the west coast of Sweden during September. These accordionists took part in a Nordic Champions of Accordion concert series and performed an exciting program.



Playing Mona Lisa

(a movie review)

By Robert K. Berta

Just out on video—a delightful movie comedy filmed in San Francisco. It is about a young lady pianist who just graduated from the SF Conservatory of Music. She has a "night" with her boy friend who asks her to marry him. The next day she comes by to give him the word yes. But when he comes to the door he says that he was drunk and didn't mean it! The rest of the story is how she tries to get her life together and find another guy with *help* from her friends about the best way to attract males. A hilarious episode occurs when some friends tell her to use the famous Mona Lisa smile (thus the movie's name) to get a guys attention—and the results of trying to put that into action with several guys.

While the movie will appeal to San Franciscans with all those great SF background shots, and the story is fun, the *real* reason to see this movie is to hear the accordion music and the premier acting appearance by BAAC member **Domenic Saso**. Domenic was hired as an actor to play an accordionist in the movie. While Nick Neronde (famed concert accordionist) provides some music in the movie also according to the credits, Domenic is the one doing it on screen. Near the end of the movie, in a big party scene, Domenic has several scenes where you can see him in the background playing. But in one scene he is on screen for some time playing his accordion and the crowd is dancing around him.

I rented my copy from the Hollywood Video Store in the Westlake Shopping Center but I am sure it will be at a lot of other video rental outlets. So next time you see Domenic at a BAAC meeting ask him for his autograph!

Organ Lessons For the Accordionist

By Bob Smith

Consider taking lessons on the organ to improve your accordion playing! Think about it. The piano accordion actually has more in common with the organ than with the piano. The piano is a percussion instrument in which a string is struck with hammers. The sound decays after the string is struck. The loudness depends on how hard the keys are hit with the fingers. True legato sounds are virtually non-existent on the piano. The organ, on the other hand, produces a continuous sound as long as the key is held down. Indeed, for the reed organ even the method of sound production is identical to that of the accordion. By using the *swell pedal*, the loudness of the tone can even be increased during a single note—just as we can do on the accordion.

Much of the teaching of the accordion has been derived from the piano and piano technique. This is the result of the extreme popularity of the piano. The piano accordion probably evolved from the chromatic button accordion because of that popularity. And we cannot deny that we can learn a lot from the piano and piano literature. But let us also learn from the great classical organists and their literature.

For myself, I am taking organ lessons at Diablo Valley College. I often learn new fingering techniques, which I can usually apply to the accordion. I suppose that I could have figured some of them out on my own, but as the saying goes why re-invent the wheel? One example is using the thumb (only!) to play adjacent notes in the scale in a legato manner. I am also learning better ways to play ascending and descending thirds. Another matter of some importance is learning how much separation to put between notes. That sounds quite trivial, but it is not. When you hear music played properly, the results are amazing.

For Your Consideration Lovello on Performing

By Paul Allan Magistretti

Tony Lovello was in town for a swing through the Bay Area and a final stop at the Cotati Festival. On August 23rd BAAC (through the efforts of Lou Soper) hosted him for a seminar on the art of performance. It was a shame more accordionists didn't attend



(about 20), because he had important information and it's a message hardly ever delivered by teachers. In fact, from what I've witnessed over the years, it may be something that never enters 99 out of 100 accordionists' minds.

Tony considers three major principles basic for a solid performance—*authority*, *confidence* and *precision*. He doesn't lecture, but rather demonstrates what he means. For detailed instruction, he has produced several videotapes, which you can buy directly from him. His message is clear: when a

performer takes the stage it should be done with authority—you're there for a reason. More importantly, you recognize that the audience is there for a reason—they're not interested in shyness (it's understood), nerves (Horowitz had stage fright) or anecdotes about your lack of preparation (a sin)—if you're really unprepared, why are you playing? Now, understand, preparation doesn't refer to your level of achievement—you don't have to be, nor are expected to be, a virtuoso; you are who you are, but you're prepared to the best of your ability. Beginners can and should play—absolutely. But anyone who takes the stage should do so like they mean business; no matter how great or humble their talent. Don't fumble and bury your face in the music. Step up and offer the audience your best; there may be errors of commission or omission in playing, but there shouldn't be in presentation.

Historically, the accordion may be an introvert's instrument—well, you can play all by yourself and it sits in front of you like a rock big enough to hide behind. And accordionists tend to hide behind their instruments like the Colonial Army hid behind trees. But stealth isn't the way to pierce your audience's heart; they're not Red Coats and *Tico Tico* isn't a musket ball. What Tony means by authority is that you're open and direct and face the audience—you may use a "trick" like he suggests—gaze over everyone's head to create an illusion of eye-contact; or, you might actually look at them. And don't forget, great stage performers often include some of the shyest, most introverted people who have ever lived and they all left behind their deeply rooted timidity once they were in front of an audience. Now, accordionists may be at a disadvantage, because they're not in makeup and costumes (except for Frank Lima) and they do have a nice, big security bellows between them and the void—violins are tiny and dancers are practically naked—so, I guess that big shell-like barrier can induce turtle-osis. But it may interest amphibious players to know that the great Italian actress Elenora Duse was so shy she was physically ill every time she had to go onstage—and she had a long career and wasn't an anorexic supermodel. But once La Duse was out there she kicked in the afterburners and never looked back and was a greater and more natural-seeming than all her nerveless, outgoing & hammy peers. I would say that the greatest performing artists who have ever lived have been essentially shy, introverted and bedeviled by nerves—and those conditions made them all the greater when

they triumphed over them. Well, you may say, the late Miles Davis at one point in his career turned his back on the audience. Yes, that was his *audience contempt period*. By then, however, he was hugely successful (on records where stage presence didn't count) and people "put up with" what was universally accepted as a petulant affectation, "Hey, dig, that's Miles, baby." Yeah, dig, Pablo Casals faced an audience and hey, baby, so did Segovia, Charlie Parker and Benny Goodman—Madonna takes off her clothes and more than *faces* an audience, but that's another story.

Now, Tony appears to have an outgoing, extroverted personality—as he presents himself. I wouldn't be surprised, however, if this public persona wasn't as much a matter of practice, will and talent as his playing. He may very well be a shy person underneath his radiant, nerveless exterior—but whether he is or not doesn't matter. When he comes to perform, he comes to perform. He doesn't tie us down with excuses of being unprepared or anecdotes about his nerves. How many times have we witnessed performers who warm up by reciting how they've barely learned what they're going to play? "I'm playing this for the second time, ever!" Then, they stumble through the music and we're sitting there muttering, "Gee, it sounds like the first time *ever* and you're lousy at sight reading." An audience will tolerate honest mistakes, but why would anyone want to play something they hardly know and guarantee fumbling mistakes aplenty? How would it sound if a contestant in the Olympics said, "I've never pole vaulted in my life, but sit there and watch me give it a try." Of course, a performer's excuses may be ingenious in order to win sympathy (it doesn't work), or maybe to head off criticism by lowering our expectations. "You can't expect too much, because I hardly know this." But when we listen to someone fumble over something they barely know we immediately appreciate the difference between honest mistakes and feeble preparation and it's *mucho* annoying. If a player who has really prepared runs into a wall—& it can happen—we *know* and our hearts go out to that person. But a slacker only deserves contempt. I often wonder why someone in the audience doesn't stand up and ask, "If you barely know it, why are you playing it for an *audience*? Are you sadistic? Masochistic? Do you think we deserve your *least* effort? Or, do you believe anything you do is worthy of our undivided attention. Perhaps your condition stems from a lack of praise while in potty training. Need we follow you to the bathroom?"

So, it's too bad that we often get people who are willing to toss off their least efforts, while there is an abundance of excellent-but-shy performers who won't ever get up and show us some of their years of preparation because of nerves and unwarranted feelings of inadequacy. I'd like to encourage closeted, shy people to stand up, take heart from Tony's suggestions and be counted. If you falter and make mistakes, they will be honest and as wonderful to witness as all the right notes.

Tony's other two points: confidence and precision seem linked. If you've practiced and achieved precision, then you'll build confidence and vice-versa. He also means, (I think) having faith in yourself—assuming a mantle of positive thinking and going ahead and plunging in without dragging yourself down with useless self-doubt. And he demonstrates: he waves his hand and—sight unseen—hits the right chord. He's missed it a few times, but he doesn't brood over it; he assumes that next time he'll be perfect. He covers more about this on his tapes, but we're also familiar with some aspects of it from a whole list of positive thinkers from the Bible down to Emerson and Albert

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Maltz's *Psycho-cybernetics*—and all those writers were correct. Confidence is a matter of having faith in yourself—people have faith in thousands of things, from great religions to the fact the sun will come up tomorrow and gravity obtains on earth—so, why not believe your sun will come up tomorrow and you'll do your best? Why think you won't? Why worry about it either way? You will or you won't—it's not rocket science and you won't die; you're just going to play some music and we'll love you for it, honest. Also, if you don't have confidence in yourself who will? And what does being riddled with self-doubt and negative thinking really accomplish? Does it make you happy? Do you smile more and treat other people better by thinking you're hopelessly unworthy and untalented? It's a waste of time. You're the best you there is at the moment & that's enough for anyone—everything else doesn't matter: go for it!

For precision, Tony recommends going into a room, turning out the lights and practicing in the dark. What he's suggesting is developing a connection in your imagination between your senses, your feelings about the music and the music (sound) itself—without getting lost and involved in the physical instrument—keys, buttons, switches—or visual micro-management: "Is F-sharp up or down an eighth of an inch; oh, there it is, press that key, *now*." He wants the accordion player to free himself from the inhibitions of what is the most physically demanding and the most difficult of all instruments to play, the accordion. He's offering important information and a method I've never heard suggested by any of my teachers, nor demonstrated by most of the hundreds of accomplished players I've witnessed staring at and fumbling with the keys. Music comes from the heart and soul of the player and merely *passes through an instrument*. So, why not practice making the instrument transparent if not invisible? Turn out the lights and make all its complications disappear and dwell on what is in your heart and what sounds you hear emerging—with nothing in between. This is a brilliant idea for an instrument that is so demanding and which tends to intrude upon our conscious minds with every push, pull and switch change. Life is much easier for flutists, violinists—every other musician—when it comes to forgetting about their instrument during playing. Tony practices what he preaches, too. He never looks at the keys and he seems to totally obliterate the physical presence of his instrument. He walks, talks and does unending bellows shakes without missing a beat. It seems his accordion is truly transparent and that he plays *through* it, not with it. Whether Tony's repertoire and style of playing are to your taste or not, he's certainly a world-class master *uber* the physical instrument. One of his most outstanding feats is how his left hand's rhythm unerringly drives whatever he's playing—whether he's walking about and/or doing bellow's shakes.

Tony's style is very much his own, but what he aspires to is the powerful, emphatic punch of a big band in the swing era. He is literally a one-man *big band*, analogous to the brass section playing of Dorsey, Goodman, Chick Webb or Basie. Now not everyone likes big band music—but that doesn't diminish Tony's achievement. My only critical remark might be that sometimes, his sheer technical prowess overpowers his art—also, that he repeats & three-peats big finishes. Remember Count Basie only did a reprise of a big ending on one tune *April in Paris* and not with every piece in his repertoire. However, Tony can be a sensitive player and he might give that side of his playing more of a chance. But he can't be faulted as a performer and his lessons should be taken seriously. Frederick Lips, Semenyov, Soave and others don't have to emulate Lovello's showmanship, but they could learn something from what he has to say about physically performing before an audience. Lips in his book on Bayan performance takes up many subtle matters of playing technique, but we've seen him and his students at times struggling with the instrument as performers instead of making it invisible. In

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contrast to most performers I've always thought Stas Venglevsky delivered an excellent presentation of himself and his instrument. Also, the last time Semenyov played duets with his wife Natalia at Donsworth, he was very outgoing and engaging—more so than in any previous engagement or in his solo playing; it was one of the best performances I've ever seen both musically and in terms of offering us a joyful, outgoing—almost transcendent experience.

Now, I wouldn't suggest that anyone paste on show-biz behavior; that's not Tony's point. He's not talking about just superficial flash and dash. He's seeking to help people find a way of opening up, getting out of their shells (turtle-osis) and letting the heart and soul of the music emerge. Don't hide your music, suffocate it, kill it or wait for it & when (like Semenyov) you may transcend yourself—come out, come out and seek it. He told an anecdote of how as a child he started to play in a dull, perfunctory way and his father took away his accordion and smashed it against the wall, "Play from the heart, or don't play at all," *babbo furioso* said. Obviously, that was a seminal moment for young Tony and ever since he has been translating his father's message and encapsulating it in lessons to teach you to open up and get out of your heart's way. I hope that accordionists will consider the ideas Mr. Lovello has brought to our attention. For information about his tapes and seminars, contact: Tony Lovello, 1-866-752-9488; write: 203 Baywood Dr. Nicholasville, KY 40356.

San Antonio Greet The World

By Juan Tejeda

The First International Accordion Festival and Symposium began on September 27th and ran until the 30th at the historic La Villita (on three separate stages at Maverick and Juarez Plazas, and the Arneson River Theatre) in San Antonio, Texas. The San Antonio Accordion Club held a press conference in front of the historic Alamo, to promote the accordion festival and symposium. Press and local television stations gathered to hear local accordionists and visiting Australian accordionist, Bernadette Conlon, give demonstrations of what could be expected.



President's Message (cont'd)

people turned out! We also took time to pay tribute to a living legend on his 80th birthday, a man who is one of the most revered and widely known accordionists of all time, Art Van Damme.

Yes, it was an inspirational and rewarding two years for all of us—and especially for me to have served as your President during these exciting and wonderful times.

Our growth as always depends on you. I hope as I leave office many more of you will step up and help our new President, Val Kieser. I hope you will give her the same energy and devotion you have given me. She and the club deserve everything you can give. If nothing else, you need to tell someone about us or invite them or bring them, so that they find out for themselves what a great accordion club we have. Will you do that for Val? For all of us?

And please note: to keep this great club going, send in your dues now! They're due and definitely needed. Make out a check to BAAC and mail it to PO BOX 318175, San Francisco, CA 94131-8175; keep us going for another year & many more to come.

Finally, I only have two words—and they can barely express my gratitude to all of you—but they come from deep inside me and I mean them as much as I have ever meant anything in my life: from the bottom of my heart, dear members, thank you.

President's Message

By Lou H. Soper

Dear members:

My term as your President will end this September 30th. I want you to know what a wonderful two years it has been for me. I have been blessed to have had such good friends, experienced such great music and to have enjoyed so many heart warming moments; I can only say that this time of my life has been priceless. Next January is my 78th birthday and it was time for me to step aside and just treasure belonging to our excellent organization for the rest of my life. You may recall that it has been my privilege, honor and pleasure to have been the President of BAAC for both its first two years as well as its 10th and 11th.



When things go right the President gets the credit. But no non-profit organization exists without generous and talented volunteers. The more generous and talented volunteers a group has, the more successful that organization will become. The President of any such organization merely asks for help, gives some direction, steps back and assists these wonderful people; whatever success I've had has been completely due to the efforts of others.

The two major outreach-lifelines for the Bay Area Accordion Club are our newsletter and our website. BAAC PAGE keeps our members informed about all of our activities and is the most important tool we own. Our editor, Paul Magistretti, is a professional writer with many years experience and he has worked very hard to improve our newsletter; it is certainly one of the most respected publications of its kind in the country. I am definitely proud of BAAC PAGE and the small part I played in making it happen.

Our website www.baaccordionclub.org now informs the whole world about who we are and what we do. In the new age of computers, we are up & running—a definite part of this important, world-changing technology. Our Webmaster, John Seckman, is a professional designer and a professor in communications at San Francisco City College; he freely volunteers his time and talent for us. Every month he updates the site with important information and sees to it that back issues of our monthly newsletters are available to the world via our site's Archive and that the current one is posted.

I especially want to thank the following volunteers and let you know who they are and what they do for us. I'll start with Jim Holliday—one of the Five Founders of BAAC. Every meeting he arrives early and sets up all the chairs and then goes to the welcoming table and carefully makes out the nametags for members and guests. Evelyn Baulch is always present to take care of our raffle tickets and does it with a charming smile. Vince Cerelli, a man who is a legend in the Accordion World—& who also had a couple of heart attacks—serves on the Board, comes to every meeting and collects our modest door fee along with Lou Casalnuova and just brightens our lives and honors us with his presence. Jim Firpo, despite having had a couple of strokes this past year, is Mr. Everything. He deals with our post office box, brings our snacks, carries our inventory and whenever anyone needed anything or I needed help, he was right there; he was a solid rock. And don't forget Rusty Bartoli, another of our Five Founders, who picks up BAAC PAGE at the printers, folds, staples, labels and mails them—it's always more than a hard night's work every month.

And there's more:

The food we enjoy at all our meetings was carefully prepared by Frances and Dominic Bennetto; they also provided the food

for our picnics—what dedication and cheerful hospitality they lavish on us—& everything is always fabulous!

Ed Zaro, what a trooper! He has attended *every meeting for eleven years* and stood behind his video camera and recorded all our activities without fail & he's over 90! What a tremendous example and what a great legacy he has built for the club.

Tom Orzechowsky and his wife Lois bring our PA system and all our other properties to every meeting and when we are done, Tom dutifully takes everything home and stores it for us—a thankless & not very easy task, but let's thank him now!

Frank Schlotter has become our historian *par excellence* and he is diligently working to provide us with a thorough and impressive pictorial history of the club. He's now serving on the Board and helping to get vests made for the Fun Band—and who can forget him in a grass skirt?.

Dear God, nobody works harder than Bob Berta and he has a large family, a full time job and yet manages to line up our musical programs, take pictures, write newsletter articles and do just about anything he's asked to do. What a generous, dedicated man—plus he's a past President, past newsletter editor, a fine accordion player and one of the nicest people you'll ever meet.

Our club is privileged to have as a member a genuine treasure in the Accordion World, Joe Smiell. This wonderful musician is a world-class conductor, arranger and composer, who honors us by guiding our highly respected *Accordion Concert Ensemble*; he also performs, informs, teaches us and just plain enriches our lives. We count our blessings every meeting.

Finally, one of the hardest working and most dedicated members this club has ever had, a person I call Ms. Everything, if not Wonder Woman, is Val Kieser. Val Kieser does more for this club than a dozen people and volunteers for everything. BAAC wouldn't be the club it is without her energy and devotion. We're lucky to have her as our forthcoming President.

There are two other gentlemen who have made my term a pleasure and a success. These two men have never said no to any request for help I asked of them. They were always behind me, supporting me and giving me their energy and affection. I consider them my closest friends and I love them dearly—C. M. Raja and Kris Nelson.

Looking over some of what we have achieved the past two years: I think our new meeting place, Patio Español, is the finest meeting hall we have ever had—and they love having us. We have a permanent home if we want it. The Moose Lodge in Colma serves, too, as an excellent auxiliary facility that we use for band rehearsals and special musical concerts—a real plus. We now serve up two free workshops a year for our members with excellent instructors who teach and assist at all levels of musical instruction.

I can't forget that there were eleven members who out of pure generosity donated enough money to provide us with our new PA system.

Summing up the past two years: we brought in world-class musicians like Jorgen Sundevist and Øivind Farnen; they packed the house. Mike Alongi and Stas Vengleski were wonderful with their duets and solos, old and new music. What an enchanting evening! Then, Tony Lovello came, played and conquered us with his artistry and dynamic showmanship. And Zhang Goupung from China! Zhang played beautiful Chinese songs as well as classical music and fabulous arrangements by Galla-Rini, Magnante and Frosini. There was that wonderful group from Sweden and finally, who can forget the Viennese Accordion Chamber Ensemble; they were sensational and 200

(turn back to page 6)

Cotati 2001

By Paul Allan Magistretti

[Last year—despite tumult & disbelief—I really didn't comment on Cotati so much as report what was written and/or told me by BAAC members. I did it at the direction of BAAC's President. The notion of reviewing the Festival hadn't occur to me—Cotati was a fixture, which we liked or grumbled about but which was accepted like an object of nature: it was there. In the past, I wrote a couple of articles in praise of it—one is still on the Festival's website. But when the critical comments accumulated, I had no choice but to air them—a newsletter shouldn't keep its members' opinions from their own publication. I didn't sign the article, because I didn't feel a proprietary interest in its concept or content, although I put the words together. After the article appeared I was glad to print every opposing opinion—except for one letter withdrawn at the author's request. This year I wasn't directed to do an article; the choice was mine.]

Cotati's Accordion Festival has marked another year. The event unfolded smoothly and offered a variety of artists with a broad range of talent. If my impression is correct, I think there was a solid effort this year to represent the broadest possible range of cultures in which the accordion plays a significant role. The event was well attended and most of the people I spoke with seemed pleased with the program and performers; there was something for almost everyone.

I thought it was fitting that two young, accomplished student players appeared, Matt Mustaro and Victoria Gavre; it was encouraging to see. One of the main purposes for Cotati is to benefit young people in school music programs and who better to put onstage? In the same vein, I wished the young recipients of the Jim Boggio Scholarships had been given a chance to play a short piece—whether they're beginners or accomplished performers; it would have been a nice touch.

The tribute to Joe Smiell was exactly right—it was well deserved recognition and fit in with the caliber of previous giants like Art Van Damme, Gallarini, Jim Boggio and Vince Cirelli—high-points in the Festival's history. Events are defined by the quality of the people they honor and Cotati's honorees have been people who represented a lifetime of accomplishment, dedication and service to their art and instrument. I thought Lou Soper's short intro of Joe was perfect (short & sweet) given the honoree's diffident attitude about his extraordinary talent.

This year's expanded range of ethnic music showed the world appeal of the accordion. I want to especially compliment the Festival for presenting Rahman Asadollahi. Giving talents like his a chance to perform represents something the Festival was created to do: to honor the accordion through defining and under-appreciated artists, people who possess great talent and whose music may not be part of our popular culture. It was a superb moment. Of course, there are still hundreds artists who should be seen and heard and very few places for them to perform: an accordion festival has its work cut out for it.

Rahman performed for BAAC a while ago through the efforts of Bob Berta, so I was very pleased that Cotati brought him to the attention of a wider audience. And Rahman was a hit. He played to a rapt audience, received a standing ovation with cries of bravo & encore (he performed the only encore of any performer on both days). I'm sure a lot of Western ears found his music far less accessible than *Don't Fence Me In*, but what everyone really

responded to was the soul of the man and his heritage, which transcended everything and offered a riveting experience for anyone with eyes and ears. People—young & old—were happy to have had the experience, if they never enjoy the music of Azerbaijan again. Cotati making room for him was wonderful and people had a chance to experience a performer who embodied the broader and deeper dimensions of our instrument.

If the Festival had a central focus this year, it seemed to be Latino. The roster was heavily freighted along those lines. It was a legitimate effort to reach a newer, larger audience in the Latino community. The performers were well chosen and talented—but unless I'm wrong a large Latino audience didn't show. And from my observations the audience thinned in the late afternoon when said groups performed—which is in no way a reflection on the Festival or the artists (they were excellent); it's the vagaries of showbiz.

With some overlapping then, the Festival covered the music of: Azerbaijan, Ireland, the South Balkans, Egypt, Cajun country, Tex-Mex-Tejano territory, the world of Klezmer, Musette stylings, Swiss yodeling, folk music and Steve Shen's Chinese/multi-cultural offerings; plus, there were dollops of pop and Italian—a comprehensive play list & forgive me if I've left something out.

Now, picking a few bones: I know Sourdough Slim appears each year for comic relief and that he has a following—but maybe it's gotten to the point where he's defining the Festival, especially if we consider Jon Hammond's article and its wide circulation [c.f. Hammond's article from the *Accordions Worldwide* website below]. I like Slim & his partner Blackie and I like them as performers. But he appears every year (seven consecutive) as well as playing at



numerous non-accordion fairs around the country. The argument in his favor is that he's fun, has an accordion on his chest, sings well and now dances and twirls a lariat, too—but his repeated appearances may suggest something less than a fond tradition. Slim's multi-tasking is a good act, but it is rather tentative in its connections with the accordion—and the connections it has are not necessarily flattering. So, when we have excellent performances like Joe Smiell with Joe, Jr. and Joe Jr.'s wife and they are mentioned (in Hammond's article) in the same breath with Slim's rope-dance-singing-accordion act, it seems untoward. After all, Slim probably chose the accordion over the guitar for his act because he assumed it had an additional comic effect (i.e., he plays a child's instrument); in his own way he is demeaning the instrument more than celebrating it. It's not Slim's fault; it's just an unfortunate circumstance and may suggest the Festival's need for self-examination.

I'll bite the bullet: perhaps it is time for Cotati's producers to consider the overall structure of the event and wonder if it's becoming stale after eleven years—even if the roster varies. The Festival may be a prisoner of its own success—and success can make changes fearful. What I see as signs of fear are the fact that year after year Cotati leans on regulars like “the usual suspects,” fills in a few blanks with newbies, but rarely does anything as courageous as what they did this year in presenting Rahman. When you get down to it Cotati is essentially presenting the same show (both days) every year. It's an understandable predicament: if it ain't broke don't fix it, but that's a philosophy not unlike the mindset of Detroit auto manufacturers in the sixties—and dare I say, Cotati may not be “broke” yet, but it's bending.

A positive note this year was Tony Lovello. I thought he comfortably filled the stage and interacted with the audience in a compelling way. On Saturday the sound engineer was feeling his way (softer passages were lost), but matters cleared up by Sunday and a ballad like *Dream* came across right down to the softest pianissimo. His performance of *Malaguena* was a hit both days. Sunday, he was better having figured out his allotted time restrictions and the nature of Cotati's outdoor venue. If he plays Cotati again, he'll tear up the place; he's got the lay of the land. I wouldn't see a conflict between him and Contino on the same bill—it might bring out the best of both—with this qualification. If Contino ever comes back I'd like to have him play solo the way he did one year when his drummer didn't work out. Also, I'd like to witness the range of talent he demonstrated when he played after hours with a group of his peers his last time here. The old pros were amazed and have been telling me about it for a year. Cotati ought to request the heartfelt, deeper Contino and not his over-exposed Italian Festival/Fan Club persona. He's an icon and a talented man, but why shouldn't an *accordion festival* see more of his talent than uncritical fans and nostalgic devotees? Contino and Lovello jamming *mano-a-mano* might excite some of the spontaneity that *Jazz at the Philharmonic* used to incite in performers and audiences alike. Shouldn't Cotati be a place where performers *don't* play it safe? Requesting what performers do is well within a producer's prerogative and most performers are only too happy to comply and do something different; in fact, they're often relieved because they're as bored with their usual stuff as we are.

It was good to see Joe Vento, but he was here and gone in one day and played for only 25 minutes. I like a change of performers from day to day, but I question some of the choices about who stays and who goes. Vento is a legend. So, why didn't he and Lovello jam? Why is there no room for putting together *spontaneous* happenings? Cotati should *make things happen* and not just book acts and run a schedule—a festive occasion shouldn't run on automatic; it needs special happenings and new fusions of talent. Things should be produced at Cotati that don't happen elsewhere generating a celebration of our instrument and the human spirit.

Another bone: Kerry Christensen is an accomplished performer. I've heard and enjoyed his performances for a number of years. He's superb. And he accompanies himself on an accordion. However, he could just as well accompany himself on any instrument, because his act is essentially yodeling. He's a nice person and a wonderful talent—I wouldn't hurt his feelings for the world, but he has his own venue somewhere and doesn't need Cotati—whereas there are hundreds of superb, purely *accordion* artists who could use exposure and money and who would be sensational appearing at a Festival devoted to their instrument.

Let's crank it up: we have a wonderful polka tent playing polkas and waltzes four hours a day and I've heard more than a yodel or two—anywhere you wander on the grounds you can hear polkas, waltzes and the standard accordion fare. I love polkas, and the standard stuff, but what about all the other kinds of music the accordion plays that we don't hear every day (or have never heard)? As in most years, there weren't any jazz performers and as far as classical music goes, I can't even say it's a memory. I really can't fathom how an accordion festival can, year after year, ignore the tremendous talent available in the classics. And if there is a limited audience for classical music, I doubt that anyone would fail to appreciate the sheer technical prowess of the artists who perform it—at least for a few minutes over two days. In fact, the Festival might even draw a new and larger audience with proper notices. On the simplest level audiences appreciate flashy playing and *classical players do it*

faster, better and with both hands simultaneously—put that on a t-shirt.

Santiago Jimenez, Jr. is a big talent & people (a few) got up to dance. But—and this is no reflection on Santiago—it seemed to me that the crowd had thinned. A Latino explosion at Cotati didn't happen. *Los Trujillo* and *Los Campos* were excellent, too, but they continued in more or less the same vein. I think most people come to Cotati for a *concert experience* and not to dance or watch others cavort in front of the stage. Dancers are more than satisfied with the polka tent (& a real dance floor); in fact, the dancers are so happy there that few of them venture to see what else is playing. So, it seems ironic that late in the afternoon when the weather cools and it's ideal for listening, that the Festival shifts into two hours of groups playing dance music (of whatever ethnicity). I might question the duration of the acts, too. Vento got 25 minutes, Lovello 35 & others, including the groups, got 45, 55 and an hour. So, twenty people pranced in front of the stage while 100 yards away the polka tent continued in its amazing and dance-pleasing way. It seems so terribly redundant—and redundancy kills the opportunity to do and show more. Why does such an approach continue every year to the exclusion of classics, jazz & hundreds of virtuosi of the instrument who never get invited?

I enjoy Frank Lima (Morgani). His costumes are imaginative and he works hard at putting fun and fantasy into what he does. He's a perfect break in the schedule and besides presenting imaginative characters, he's an excellent accordionist. He was especially heroic this time in a hot, airless costume. On top of that, he never fails to circulate afterwards for everyone to see close up, especially the kids.

Summing up: this year is to be applauded for diversity, but I still believe that solo/duo accordion performers (whatever their music) should get preference in order to deepen and broaden the public's awareness. Dropping an accordion into a group as a background instrument or a prop at an event called Accordion Festival seems like putting a goldfish in a bowl on a table and calling it an ocean.

Sometimes, I wonder if less might be more. I wonder if it's necessary to have *non-stop* entertainment, especially if the acts aren't pure accordion. Is it a virtue? What about reconsidering the structure of Cotati's self-proclaimed *extravaganza*? Why can't there be breaks for people to play among themselves and be able to hear each other? Fewer acts (by which I mean eliminating fillers & comic relief) might help the event. After all, the overhead must be enormous. Eliminating the need for non-stop performances and fine-tuning the roster could increase the bottom line for school music programs and perhaps allow more focus on definitive accordion performers. Furthermore, breaks would give the audience a chance to circulate, rest and play among themselves—it's hard to "jam" when fifteen speakers are blaring constantly. It might even be pleasant just to hear the non-amplified sound of dozens of accordions playing hither and yon around the park. A revised structure of the Festival might make the audience more appreciative by giving them a chance to refresh themselves without missing anything. Music itself has to breathe.

A final thought: instead of a constant flow of booked, paid entertainers, why couldn't there be a presentation of amateur performers? The various accordion clubs might help find ten young performers under 18 to play on Saturday (one song each) and ten performers over 18 (up to 108) to perform one piece each on Sunday—an abundance of talent on both days. It might even be considered a talent search with a jury and a prize. Such a contest could generate renewed interest and publicity for the Festival, because I think a talent search over two days is more interesting than repeating certain acts that merely repeat themselves. The Festival seems to be getting fewer people

attending both days—the attitude is, see one day, see it all. If the days offered an essentially different show, repeat business might add to the total. An emergence of a talent search at Cotati might add a new dimension to the Festival's identity as an accordion event—plus, for one hour each day the acts would be free. What better & more useful identity for Cotati than to be considered a venue for *discovering* accordion talent? Maybe after eleven years some re-thinking & restructuring might permit Cotati to serve art, school children and the promotion of the accordion even better than it has.

Cotati 2001

By Jon Hammond
(from *Accordions Worldwide Website*)

The theme of this year's 11th Annual Cotati Accordion Festival was 2001: *an Accordion Odyssey*. The festival took place on August 25th and 26th in Plaza Park, Cotati and at the entrance to the park is a life-size statue of deceased local accordion hero, Jim Boggio, to whom the festival is dedicated.



This year the Honorary Director of the festival was Joe Smiell, who performed with his son, Joe Jr. and daughter-in-law who accompanied him on his button accordion which dates back to the 1800's. An entertaining performance was given by Sourdough Slim who made accordion history by being the first known accordionist to

simultaneously twirl a lariat, play the accordion, do a jig, and yodel! Sourdough Slim also entertained with Blackwood Tom and this is the 7th consecutive year they have played at the Festival. Over 2,000 people enjoyed their renditions of old cowpoke favorites such as, *Ding Dong Daddy from Dumas* and a Cole Porter composition, *Don't Fence Me In*. Other performers included Rene Pena-Govea with her family band—*Los Campas*, the Balkan folk dance group, *Anoush*, and the father and son duo of Steve & Michael Trucco.



Steve & Mike Trucco

Viennese CDs & Tape

The *Viennese Accordion Chamber Ensemble* CD's and tapes are available. The CDs are \$15 each; the tapes \$10. The collective title for the CDs is: *The Accordion in Concert* (Vols. 1 & 2); the tape is entitled *Everlasting Accordion Classics*. A special price for a complete set of 2 CDs + the tape is \$35. Anyone interested in purchasing them can call Valerie Kieser (510) 531-4836; she'll also bring some to the October 3rd meeting.

Women in Argentina

By Florencia Herrera

On September 15th an event entitled *Women of the Accordion* was held for the second consecutive year in Buenos Aires with participants from all over the Entre Rios province. Performances were given by Gloria Casadey, Vilma Salvetti, Fátima Ferrabut, Silvina Vello, Thelma Gonzáles, Miriam Gutierrez, Marta Balbuena, Yanina Hirschfeld, Juana Izaguirre, Mary Barrios, Mariana Duarte, Zulma Graz Pereyra, Florencia Herrera and Marcia Muller. The program included a variety of popular chamamés, chamarritas, fox-trots, tangos, two steps, cuambia and Brazilian tunes.

Ensemble's 40th Year

By Holda Paoletti-Kampl

This year the Accordion Ensemble of L'Ille de Strasbourg Robertsau will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its inception (in December 1961). The ensemble (which is managed by George Schwing and Rene Chalot) is well known in Europe through its concerts and cultural exchanges in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, the UK and France.



The Ensemble is very concerned with interpretation and the 20

voluntary musicians with their director Denis Daeffler, play a variety of music such as traditional, modern, original music, haversack and others. With a repertoire that is renewed annually, the EAI accordionists convey their love of music, which is intended to please a large audience. This year French accordionist Jean-Louis Noton and the Ensemble gave performances to demonstrate that the accordion is a modern instrument with real potential for the future.

70 Years of Accordions

By Holda Paoletti-Kampl

The Deutscher Harmonika Verband e.V. (DHV) held their 70th anniversary celebration on September 15th. The festivities included moderator Frank Golischewski (entertainer author, composer, actor and director), Berlin entertainers, the Akkordeon Quintett Hof, the Neuenburg Ensemble, Comedy Brothers, Blancke Trio (vocals, guitar, percussion, mandolin and accordion) from Bremerhaven, New Colony of Dance, Accordion Acoustic Ensemble (Trossingen), F & F Duo (Hildrizhausen) and *Au bal Musette* (Munich). The traveling exhibition of the German Harmonica Museum presented a photo exhibition of the *Landesjugenorchester* (State Youth Orchestra) which gave an interesting insight into accordion history.

Accordion Francais

French accordionist Bruno Maurice was appointed the new Professor of accordion at the National Conservatory of Bordeaux in west France. Bruno succeeds Mr Apparailly (who has retired) and was chosen from five candidates by Conservatory Director, M. Portelli. The National Conservatory of Bordeaux is the third largest conservatory in France (after Paris and Lyon) with 1600 students, 2 symphonic orchestras, one jazz big band, many choirs and 70 teachers.



Bruno plans to extend the accordion's development in the conservatory by teaching a variety of accordion styles, increasing the choice of music (transcriptions, jazz, improvisation, modern etc), and mixing the accordion with other instruments, therefore attracting further students. Email: Bruno.maurice@mageos.com

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1st Wed. 7:30 pm. *Patio Español*,
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<http://www.baaccordionclub.org>

East Bay Accordion Circle:
2nd Thurs. 7:30pm. **NEW LOCATION!**
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ACR Fun Band Practice:
2nd Mon. 7-9pm. McDowell
Elementary School.
421 South McDowell Blvd.
Petaluma. Info: Gwyn Lister
(415) 924-3202

Golden St. Accordion Club:
2nd Tues. Pietro's #2. 679 Merchant.
Vacaville. Info: (707) 864-2359

Good Time Accordion Club:
2nd Weds. Community Center. 7PM.
1055 Escalon Ave.
Escalon, CA. Info: (209) 545-3603

ACR General Meeting:
3RD Mon. 7:30pm
Herman Sons Hall. 860 Western. Petaluma.
Info: Harry Cannata (707) 838-2859

South Bay Jam
1st Sunday 2PM.
7th Day Adventist Church
off Camden and Kooser.

BAAC Ensemble
2nd & 4th Weds 7pm.
Moose Lodge, Daly City.
Confirm: Frank Montoro (650) 574-4757.

BAAC "Fun Band"
3rd Weds 7pm.
Moose Lodge Daly City.
Confirm: Val Kieser (510) 531-4836.

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Oct. 14 (Sunday), 2-4: French Country Dance Music for piano accordion. With Gary Breitbart. Intermediate-advanced levels; \$25, sign up ahead of time.

Oct. 18 (Thursday), 7:30-9: Rick Corrigan & the pickPocket Ensemble. Corrigan is a talented composer an exacting performer and his band's dreamlike sound has been described as "cafe music without borders." \$4 at the door.

Ongoing Wednesdays, 7 pm: Drop-In Accordion Classes at Boaz Accordions. No experience necessary! We supply the accordion (or bring your own); \$15 per class—the Sixth class is **free** with your *Frequent Squeezer* card.

Folk, classical and popular music with Henri Ducharme. Henri studied classical accordion for 14 years in Chicago with Edmund White. New students: 7-8; Advanced-beginners: 8-9: Oct. 10 & 24, Nov. 7.

Oct. 3, 17 & 31: Button Box & Concertina. Sea Chanteys, French Canadian, Irish, folk with Boaz Rubin, proprietor of Boaz Accordions. Learn the traditional way—by ear.

Nov. 7, 8-9 (Wednesday): Latin Button Accordion with Miguel Govea of the popular band *Los Compas*. Intermediate-advanced; \$15, sign up ahead.

BAAC PAGE Editor & Layout Paul Allan Magistretti Contributors

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Letters to the Editor

8/27/01

Hello, Paul,

Just got to look through the BAAC PAGE back issues you sent. Quite impressive! Beautiful layout work. A classy newsletter; perhaps the nicest accordion club newsletter in the USA. I think they're better than ATG & AAA newsletters any day. —Henry Doktorski

7/27/01

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your always most interesting newsletter. For sure, you publish the most interesting letter of any I get. You're a journalist of the first water. —Eddie Chavéz

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All
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Arranging & Chords
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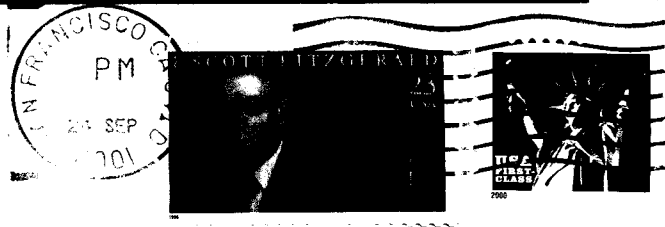


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