

December Accordion Circle

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Accordions by the Bay

I ACE Ensemble I I

2:00pm Sunday, December 18 [directions to Oyster Point Yacht Club on back page]

A special holiday gathering of the San Francisco Accordion Club will take place December 18, 2016. The first half of the meeting will be devoted to the SFAC's participatory Accordion Circle, with the Jam Band at 1:15 followed by individual soloists - including Lynn Ewing, Jana Maas, and Mike Zampiceni. To close out the first half, other individuals will be able to step up and play a piece, as we did in the October Accordion Circle. Our second half will feature **ACE** — **the San Francisco Accordion Chamber Ensemble** — directed by Joe Smiell, Jr.

Lynn Ewing will lead the jam band in playing winter and holiday selections as well as pieces from the standard SFAC jam book. Accordionists of all skill levels are invited to participate in the band and solo timeslots.

The ACE Ensemble formed in 1995 and was under the direction of Joe Smiell, Senior. Joe arranged several hundred pieces for the ensemble, of



varying genres. The ensemble played in many venues, including Alliance Francaise, the French Embassy, the Oakland Museum, and many schools, as well as semi-annual concerts. At one time, there were 18 members in the group. After Joe's death in 2012, the ensemble continued under the direction of Joe's son, **Joseph Smiell,** although with fewer members, due to health, work, and other issues. The ensemble now plays primarily classical music, which is Joe's specialty. We are now in our 21st year!

Lynn, Nora, and Sharon have been in the group since 1995. Reno, Anne, and Grigoriy joined during the course of the ensuing years. Although ACE has not been as active as it was under Joe Senior, we have played several events at the Cupertino Senior Center, as well as several other concerts.

The regular members of ACE are: Lynn Ewing, Grigoriy Krumik, Sharon Greyhosky, Nora Mazzara, Anne Metais and Reno Di Bono. Joining ACE for this performance will be Jana Maas, Sally Ann Smiell, and Norman Ortiz.



ACE rehearses on Mondays 10:30 til 1:30, and is seeking new players, intermediate to advanced level.

If you are interested, please contact Lynn at ewinglynn@gmail.com

□ December's Invited Soloists □ □

By popular demand, Jana Maas, Lynn Ewing and Mike Zampiceni will favor us with short sets of festive & novelty numbers to kick off the Accordion Circle solo sessions.







Lynn Ewing served as SFAC President for the past 5 years. She teaches private accordion students, and performs with the San Francisco Accordion Chamber Ensemble (ACE) and AbsolutAccord.

Jana Maas has gained international recognition participating and teaching at accordion camps throughout the U.S. She has several original compositions and arrangements, one of which is included on Stas Venglevski's latest album.

Mike Zampiceni's passionate genres revolve around classical music and jazz, but he also has a penchant for Latin music, particularly Brazilian jazz. He also has a repertoire of ethnic European music.

November Meeting Review

By Mike Zampiceni

The November meeting provided a memorable high-caliber performance for all those who attended to hear the two featured performing groups, the Aurora Mandolin Orchestra and the Ron Borelli trio. I've had personally rewarding experiences with both the orchestra and Ron for several years, so I was particularly pleased to be the emcee for the day.

Having the mandolin group perform for us is a very rare experience, as there certainly aren't very many such groups performing. The original Aurora Mandolin Orchestra dates way back to the 1930s, and consisted of more than 30 professional and amateur musicians playing mandolin, mandola, mandocello, guitar, string bass, flute, percussion, and yes, even an accordion. The

orchestra utilizes a broad and varied repertoire of folk music, semi-classical Italian, Spanish, and Russian songs, popular "oldies", contemporary pieces, excerpts from operas, and classical orchestra compositions written specifically for mandolin.

About three years ago, Don Nurisso, former accordionist with the group, asked me if I'd be interested in replacing him because of his relocation away from the Bay Area, and shortly thereafter, Josephine Pellegrini, the director and conductor of the group, contacted me as well. I indicated that I would be willing to assist, at least on an interim basis, until the group could find a competent accordionist. Consequently, I experienced a very gratifying year with the group, performing my assigned "charts" with them for a couple of concerts, as well as performing in a dance combo subset of the group. I respected Jo's musicianship as well as that of the entire orchestra, and their stellar performance today served to reinforce my recollections of the group as a first-rate organization.



I turned the microphone over to Jo for the first half of our musical program, and after briefly greeting the audience and introducing the orchestra, she lifted her conductor's baton and opened the program with a lively Spanish waltz entitled "Don Armando," followed by "I Talk to the Trees" from the musical "Paint Your Wagon." By this point, I noticed that the orchestral blend was perfect, so that a single instrument did not stand out among the others.

After performing these pieces, Jo spoke to the audience about mandolin history and the various types and timbres of instruments. She also pointed to the accompanying instruments of the guitar, bass flute, and of course, an accordion ably played by Patricia Brown from our club.

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Two French selections were next, the first of which was "Le Tango Du Reve," which renowned Xavier Cugat recorded with his orchestra. This rendition displayed the bountiful precision and dynamic range under Jo's directorship. As I can attest to from my involvement in the group, Jo is an excellent conductor and rehearsal coach, and I never felt left in the wilderness when following her conducting technique. The second French selection was "La Vallee Maudite" from a 1947 French film of the same name, a multi-part composition that was reminiscent of a late 19th century work.

After pleasing all of the Francophiles in the audience, Jo turned over her baton to lead player Bob Rosetto so that Jo could play



her mandolin on Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine." Towards the end, this arrangement interestingly alternated between beguine and swing rhythms, and featured Patricia's brief accordion solo for the last eight measures of the song. Bob then conducted a Christmas medley sing-along, for which the lyrics had been passed out to audience members.

When Jo resumed her conducting role, she led the orchestra on "La Vita e Bella" from the eponymously named 1997 Italian film, which is played often throughout the movie. The next piece, "Libertango," has a rich history among accordionists, because Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla was a premier bandoneonist and prolific composer of tangos for the instrument, which were more revolutionary than typical tangos of the day by incorporating elements of jazz, extended harmonies, and dissonance. The flute solo as well as Patricia's accordion solo really enhanced this rendition of the composition. Notable recordings and arrangements of this composition have been made by Frank Marocco and Richard Galliano.

A slow, contemplative waltz entitled "I Te Vurria a Vasa" preceded the group's finale, a spirited Italian Neapolitan waltz with a strong first beat entitled "Guapparia," in which Jo led the audience with hand clapping. This provided a good warm-up for the audience to express their gratitude with enthusiastic applause

for treating us to a fulfilling performance.

After our usual social break and raffle presentation, I had the honor of introducing Ron Borelli, violinist Andrei Bostan and bassist Steve Auerbach; amazingly, they had never played together before the day of their performance. It's a truism among musicians that music is an international language, and if members of a combo such as this are top-drawer musicians, with accompanying "charts" (typically melody lines with chord symbols) and some instructions from the leader, they can assemble anywhere in the world with unknown fellow musicians and perform just as if they had worked together for years. Since Ron brought "charts" for his sidemen, Andrei and Steve both performed as adroitly as if they had been working with Ron for years.

As a fellow accordion professional, I've had a musical association with Ron for many years, and have known him to be an affable, enthusiastic proponent of our instrument as well as a musician's musician. We've referred gigs to each other for years, and even have had a chance to jam together a couple of times at a North Beach restaurant. He's also one of the nicest persons you could know. I joked with Ron while introducing him that I wondered if there was any venue where he hadn't performed.



When Ron plays, you hear sophisticated harmonies and melodic improvisations, along with impeccable keyboard and bass technique. I personally like Ron's inventive and far-reaching improvised melodic lines, ranging through the entire keyboard

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from bottom to top and back again. It's a certainty that all of the keys on his keyboard are well used during his solos.

After introducing his sidemen, Ron stated the theme for the day's performance, which was the gypsy jazz style pioneered by ground-breaking 3-fingered guitarist, Django Reinhardt. This style combined a dark, chromatic gypsy flavor with the swing articulation of the 1930s. Ron opened up with "Swingin' by Andrei," a Bostan composition in A minor, to introduce the Reinhart style before playing other music genres.

Duke Ellington's "In a Sentimental Mood" ballad initially featured Steve in a bass solo. After the trio played in unison from the "charts," Ron took over the helm with a beautiful improvised solo, and then Andrei stepped in with an equally beautiful solo. Next up was a flying metronome version of "Avalon," in which bassist Auerbach really got a workout plucking notes for every beat. The samba "El Cumbanchero" was rendered up-tempo in C minor. The audience received a reprise of the earlier "Libertango" composition by Piazzolla in the form of Piazzola's introspective and emotionally moving "Oblivion." A sharp contrast in genres was evident in the next selection of Gershwin's "Embraceable You." The group concluded their tour of musical genres with September Bossa, one of Andrei's compositions, which was a very smooth, easy listening selection in G minor.

Ron said the remainder of the program would be dedicated to Django Reinhart and gypsy jazz music. He also said that he plays on weekends at the Doubletree in Burlingame, and mentioned that he does an Art Van Damme tribute there the first Thursday of the month. The first tune of this group of songs was "Djangology," a very swinging piece featuring solos from all three musicians. "Bossa Dorada" was next, which was a very lively and dynamically assertive piece in D minor. Contemporary "Tchavolo Swing," written by German gypsy guitarist Tchavolo Schmidt, had a clever beginning in which successive percussive chords were played, and the violin and accordion played the melody in unison.

After a much-deserved standing ovation and encore piece, the dynamic and lively program presented by the Aurora Mandolins and Ron Borelli trio concluded for the day, and all attendees were content with yet another quality program brought to you by the Board of the San Francisco Accordion Club.

PLAY for your club!

Playing warm up or during the break for our Sunday music program is a great, casual way to share your talent and hone your performance skills. Our scheduled performers are drawn from professional players and groups, and from talented amateurs as well. Call us—we're happy to add you to the schedule to play a 10-15 minute set, or even just a couple of songs.

Contact:

Dominic Palmisano

(415) 587-4423 accord47@gmail.com

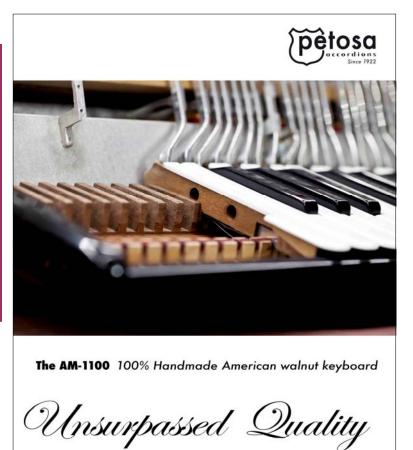
- OR -

Lynn Ewing

(650) 453-3391 ewinglynn@gmail.com



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An Accordion Visits Cuba

By Lynn Ewing

I had the good fortune to go on a People to People trip to Cuba in November, and made the decision to bring a small accordion along. It was a little 2 octave, 32 bass baby, and I thought I could just sling it over my shoulder and have it with me most of the time, and that's what I did.

What a great idea it turned out to be! There is so much music and art of all kinds in Cuba, but (surprisingly to me) very few accordions. We went with a group, The Grand Circle Travel Foundation, and they provided a truly memorable experience for us. We were able to visit many venues, among which were a Music Conservatory, several open rehearsals of various Dance groups, and many visual artists. During each of these visits, we had time to interact with the people, and the accordion was a tremendous ice breaker. It transformed the experience from a routine "they are performing, and we are watching" into people interacting excitedly. Many of these people had never seen an accordion in real life, although everyone knew what they were. (I would compare it to perhaps how most of us have an experience of bagpipes - we know what they are, but it's rare that someone brings one into arm's reach.)

We had music at almost every lunch and, and I was invited to join in more often than not, and sometimes had the opportunity to jam for a while afterward. We went to a village where we were right across from a school, and I honestly felt like the Pied Piper there! We rode from the Ranch we had visited to the village in the back of a horse cart, and I was playing as we went. Whenever I stopped, the driver would turn around to me and say





"more, more!" When we disembarked, we were swarmed with kids, and I just stayed and played, taught them "Itsy Bitsy Spider," and of course, "Old MacDonald had a Farm" -a huge hit. In terms of doing something like this, I will say that I was totally out of my comfort zone. (I had no music with me, and I had not really come prepared to play solos, as my picture was that maybe I could just join in to whatever music was going on, and I did do that. But they all wanted to hear how the accordion sounded, and so I fell back on "Beer Barrel Polka", "La Vie en Rose", and even "Lady of Spain" once or twice when caught by surprise.

As days passed I learned quickly by ear the basic tourist repertoire, which included "Besame Mucho", the unofficial National Anthem "Guantanamera" (it was written by a Cuban), "La Bamba", "Quizás, Quizás, Quizás", and several Beatles Songs.) Everyone seemed to know "New York, New York", but nobody had heard "I Left my Heart in San Francisco". Fortunately, we had some other singers in the groups, and the biggest challenge on that one was finding a key that people could manage on that small accordion! Our guide said that she had never had a group that had so much interaction with the people we met, and she attributed it mostly to the accordion.

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Lynn's Trip to Cuba

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This was the first time I played. It was at the Music Conservatory, and they had a band of angklung players - something like a bell choir. This particular piece was "Memories" from Cats, and it was the only time I got to read music!



This pic is of me playing at a Senior Center - they all sang along, and it was such a rewarding experience!



This was the place I missed a step and sprained my ankle. So, while the rest of the group was touring an organic farm, I jammed with these musicians with an ice bag on my foot!





It was a wonderful experience, and if you have an opportunity to travel with your accordion - I recommend it!

SFAC News

Important Announcement: Meeting Venue Potential Change

Lynn Ewing

It is my unfortunate duty to inform you that big changes are coming to Oyster Point Yacht Club, and these changes may result in SFAC losing this wonderful facility as our venue.

For financial reasons, OPYC has made the decision to turn their main dining/stage area over to a catering contract with Dominic's at Oyster Point. I have spoken to the owner, and he has been very pleasant. However, he has between 20 and 40 catering events a month, and naturally most of these will be on weekends.

We are assured the venue for at least December, January and February. After that, our future here is uncertain. Your Board is busy exploring other venues. If you have an idea you feel would be viable, please contact one of your Board members with your suggestion.

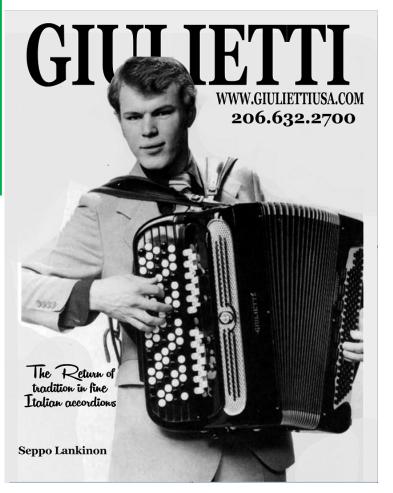
This is, of course, a major setback for our club, and we hope that you will support us over the next few months by attending the meetings we have remaining at Oyster Point Yacht Club.

Join In the Fun!

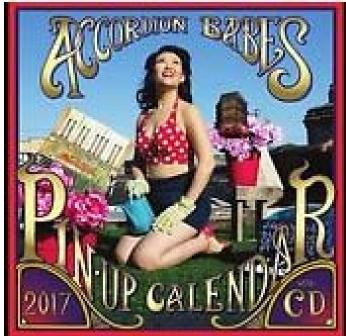
Helping with the monthly music programs is a great way to meet new people and make the program run smoothly. We welcome people to help emcee the program, take photos or write a lively report about the music program. You don't need experience just a willingness to help while you have fun with the group. Discover your inner entertainer, photographer or writer and help us host our monthly events.

Contact Lynn Ewing, ewinglynn@gmail.com, 650-867-2633 to find out how to get in on the action!

Our Sincere Thanks to those who generously donate to the Club. With each new membership year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30) we start a cumulative list of donors. If you have donated and your name doesn't show up in this column, please contact Elaine at elainedc@sbcglobal.net or 510-921-9323 and let her know. We greatly appreciate your support and we want to be sure you are recognized. We gratefully acknowledge donations from: Chris & Tor Arild, Karol Blackaby, Ron Borelli, David Braun, Dr. & Mrs. Anthony Bruno, Xavier de la Prade, William Demichelis, Marja Gullmes, Bruce Kirschner, Franco Lucchesi, Mr. Mike Marotta, James & Lee Ann Monfredini, Anna Nicora, Kenneth Nimmo, Gisele Oakes, Paul Pasquali, Douglas & Kay Patterson, Joseph Petosa, Diana & Bruce Prurucker, Vinny Rinaldi, Alexander Roitman, Ed Salvador, Don & Mary Savant, Leslie Selfridge, Hilbert & Hilde Werner, Barbara Winter and Mike Zampiceni. Thank you, all!



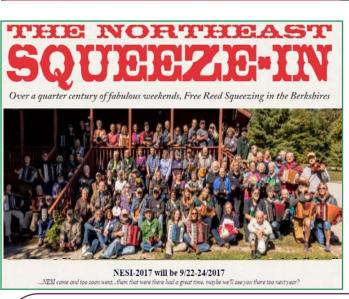
ACCORDION HAPPENINGS



The 2017 Accordion Babes are here!

A gorgeous full-color pin-up calendar features 13 accordion-playing women in sexy and fun poses. Includes a compilation CD of their music. Available at the December SFAC meeting for \$15.

This gift-giving season, give Babes!







ACCORDION LOVERS' TRIP OF A LIFETIME MAY 16-20, 2017

Trips Depart London Heathrow

This is a bucket-list trip for all true accordion aficionados! Come to Castelfidardo, Italy—the spiritual home of the accordion—and renew your love affair with this amazing instrument. Wander the streets and sample the culture of Castelfidardo. Learn more about the artistry of accordion design and manufacture. Revel in the company of accordion lovers from all over the world. Enjoy jam sessions with your fellow travelers.

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For more information, contact:

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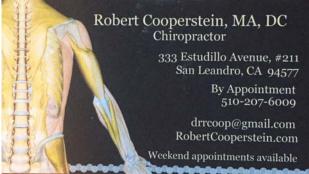
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1/4-page: \$25: 1/2-page: \$50: Full-page: \$100. Non-member rates are double.

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Please Remember...

Help keep our meeting space at the Oyster Point Yacht Club clean! Wipe up food or drink spills and recycle all trash. *THANK YOU!*

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Newsletter Layout, Content Coordinator

(Positions open, volunteers needed!)

Scholarship

Mike Zampiceni (see Secretary, above, for contact info)

Play with the Jam Band

Join us 1:15-2:00 pm for a traditional jam session before the 3rd-Sunday music programs at Oyster Point Yacht Club.

Our informal jam band is open to everyone, regardless of experience. Learn new riffs, make new accordion friends and have **WAY TOO MUCH FUN!**

Bay Area Accordion Clubs

Accordion Club of the Redwoods

3rd Monday at 7:30 pm. — \$3 admission Hermann Sons Hall, 860 Western, Petaluma Contact: Tony Mustaro, President (707) 318-0474 <u>dcdaca-po@gmail.com</u>

Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC) - 3 Chapters:

<u>gsaccordionclub.netfirms.com</u> Contact: Jean Stevens, President (916) 872-8081 accordionriffs@gmail.com

> GSAC Vacaville Chapter 2nd Thursday at 6:30 pm. Pietro's No. 2, 679 Merchant Street, Vacaville

GSAC Humboldt Chapter 3rd Tuesday at 7pm. Humboldt Swiss Club 5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta

GSAC Sacramento Chapter 4th Wednesday at 7 pm. Old Spaghetti Factory, 12401 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova

Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC)

2nd Wednesday at 7 pm. Escalon Community Center 1055 Escalon Ave, Escalon

Contact: Ed Sciarini (209) 545-3603

Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS)

1st Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Lutheran Church Hall, 6365 Douglas Blvd, off Hwy 80, Granite Bay Contact: Jim Shoemaker (916) 443-0974

Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS)

1st Sunday at 1pm. Harry's Hofbrau, 390 Saratoga Avenue (corner of Kiely), San Jose www.svasociety.org \$5 for adults, no charge under 16



Many hands make light work! Please talk to any board member if you are willing to help the SFAC continue its excellent programs and activities!

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RICHARD DENIER Carmel - rjd.denier@gmail.com

PETER DI BONO San Francisco <u>www.peterdibono.com</u>

RENO DI BONO South Bay - ourhike@aol.com www.italianaccordion.com

WILLIAM DE MICHELIS South Bay accordionist.sanjose@comcast.net

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Join us the third Sunday of each month at the Oyster Point Yacht Club • 911 Marina Blvd • South San Francisco

SFAC SUNDAY MUSIC PROGRAM

Come for fun and great music!! Sunday, December 18

ACE (Accordion Chamber Ensemble)

+ Jana Maas, Mike Zampiceni, Lynn Ewing

Admission: \$8 members, \$10 guests

1:15pm Jam Band

OYSTER POINT YACHT CLUB Plenty of free parking, ramp access.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 101 (North or South) in South San Francisco, take the Oyster Point Blvd exit and follow signs to Marina Blvd. Avoid turning right onto Gull Dr. immediately before Marina Blvd.

Turn right onto Marina Blvd and continue 0.7 mile, past the Oyster Point Marina gatehouse to the Oyster Point Yacht Club on the left.

San Francisco Accordion Club Newsletter

P.O. Box 318175 San Francisco, CA 94131-8175 www.sfaccordionclub.com



SFAC 2016-17 Dues

Club membership year is Oct.-Sept.

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