

June, 2018



♪ ♪ **SFAC Accordion Circle!** ♪ ♪

Sunday, June 17, 2018

Chetcuti Community Room
450 Poplar Street, Millbrae, CA
2:00 pm—4:45 pm

Please bring your accordion and be ready to have fun for another meeting in the SFAC's bi-monthly **Accordion Circle** format. Just show up to secure your spot in the circle to play together from the SFAC jam book, but be sure to also add your name to the open mic play-list so others can hear what you've been working on. It is a friendly atmosphere, and cheering-on each other musically feels good. Accordionists of all skill levels are welcome - from very beginner, to someone dusting off that accordion in the closet after raising a family or pursuing a career, to the seasoned expert. If you don't play the accordion - come anyway and enjoy the music. There will probably even be a few tunes to sing along with.

Sunday June 17, from 2:00 pm until 4:45-ish.



May Event Review

by Steve Marshall



The May meeting went off without a hitch on May 20th, as two favorites performed. **Gloria Mendieta - Gazave** and **Paul Aebersold** make up *Il Dueto Musica*. They favored us with a mix of vocal selections, tempered with a few instrumental numbers, performed by Paul. The duo opened with *Oh Marie*, and closed with sing-along favorites *That's Amore* and *Arrivederci Roma*.



In between were songs from Verdi, Puccini, and two selections from Bizet's *Carmen*. They also played *Mona Lisa*, a song made famous by the masterful and al-

ways musical Nat King Cole. As always, the duo came decked out in costume.



Apparently, it does take two to tango. After our break, **Tangonero** arrived in a stripped down version, including only **Alex Roitman** on bandoneon and the abundantly talented **Dr. Celest Chiam** on piano. Alex began with a solo piece, moving his instrument from his left knee to both knees, like a par-



Continued on next page ...

(continued from page 2)

May Event Review

by Steve Marshall

entertaining an infant. Alex's skilled "dance" was fascinating to watch. Alex was kind enough to demonstrate his instrument, and explain some of the similarities, and differences, between the bandoneon and the accordion. I would be loathe to replicate his clear, expert analysis, but I will mention that the bandoneon is designed to allow the player to produce short, staccato bursts, in a manner not possible using a standard piano accordion. The instrumental duo was assisted by vocalist **Claudio Ortega** who sang Milongas, songs in a style that pre-dates the tango. Alex's daughter, **Maria**, added her vocals as well; she sang a piece entitled *Nostalgas*. I heard bits of blues and jazz in her vocal delivery. She sang with a maturity that belied her obvious youth. Both vocalists performed a beautiful version of *Milonga Sentimental*, blending adeptly with each other, as well as the musicians. Alex also performed a solo piece, entitled *Garde Vieja*. Alex will be performing this piece at the 2018 Che Bandoneon International Competition in Stowe, Vermont. Best of luck to Alex, from all here at the San Francisco Accordion Club!!

After the performances, Lynn Ewing conducted the Jam Band. Standards such as *Five Foot Two*, *States Waltz*, *Tennessee Waltz*, and *Bye Bye Blackbird* were performed by a small, but motivated group of players. Mark Zhagel brought, and demonstrated, his new Roland Fr-4x, favoring us with numerous instrumental and vocal sounds generated with his new electric accordion. He exclaimed that, since purchasing his new instrument he enjoys playing and practicing for hours on end. Remember, all members (and non-members) are invited to join in and play old favorites, and new additions with us, so feel free to bring your accordion and join in!

San Francisco Accordion Club T-Shirts Have Arrived!

Our very own San Francisco Accordion Club T-shirts were introduced at the May event. We have a few more, which will be available at the June meeting at \$20 each on a first-come, first-served basis.



Guess Who?

This kid was no stranger at accordion recitals and events such as Knights of Columbus spaghetti dinners, and of course family gatherings also required accordion playing. Hailing from Allentown, PA at a time and place when door-to-door sales and music studios offering lessons were a common experience. His teacher was Charles Knautz from Keyboard Studios for 9 years and this picture is from about 1953. These days he resides in the Bay Area and plays year-round but is busiest in October. Can you guess who this SFAC member is?

(answer on page 11)

What Events Led to the Formation of the American Accordionists' Association?

"When the musical history of our times comes to be written, one chapter will stand head and shoulders above all others in point of interest and importance, and that chapter will deal with the growth of the accordion movement during the last four years!"

Accordion News, October 1937

In the 1930s, when one reflects on these years, two things immediately come to mind: the Great Depression and the emergence of the radio. By 1932, the radio dominated mass media throughout the industrial nations.

The piano accordion, still in its "infancy", had been a huge hit in vaudeville for many years. The accordions in the 1920s were filled with rhinestones and other ornamentation to "wow" the vaudeville show audiences. When the radio became the rage – a new, inexpensive form of entertainment at a time when money was scarce – vaudeville simply died out.

The vaudeville accordion stars were soon hired by the radio stations. By the late 1930s, one could hear accordions playing on the live radio programs all over the country. Many of the founders of the AAA performed weekly on the radio (these founders were all working in New York City).



Photo captions left to right: Rudolph, Frosini, Vincent, Sammy, Rastus, Cuckoo, Mephesto, Ignatz, John B. Gambling



Founders: **Front:** Pietro Frosini, Abe Goldman, Sydney Dawson
Center: Anthony Galla-Rini, Charles Magnante, Pietro Deiro Sr., Charles Nunzio
Back: Gene Von Hallburg, Joe Biviano
Not in photo: John Gart, Sam Rowland, Byron Streep

While long distance calls to other accordionists were pretty much unheard of, and long letters were few and far between, musicians from all over the US and Canada

would meet annually in Chicago for the Music Trades Convention, where discussions on "everything accordion" would take place day and night.

These performers and educators (listed above) were busy arranging music for the radio programs, plus they were teaching, performing outside of the studios, composing solos and band pieces for accordion, and writing accordion instruction books.

Yet, these men, along with other giants in the music world (all from the New York City area) -- Pietro Deiro, Anthony Galla-Rini, Byron Streep, Sidney Dawson, Abe Goldman, Gene Von Hallberg and Sam Rowland – were passionate about the new instrument they had grown to love and come to master: the piano accordion.

Sam Rowland, who had founded the American Drummers' Association, suggested that they form a new national organization for the accordion, headquartered in New York City. Thus, the American Accordionists' Association was established, holding its first meeting on March 9, 1938.

How Many Accordions Are Enough?

Joe Domitrowich — Accordion Memoirs — Part 2a

In the 1980s, while talking with master craftsman, Vince Cirelli, in his workshop near San Francisco as he performed some minor repairs on my Excelsiola, I noticed some accordion complete bass mechanisms sitting on a shelf and inquired. Vince told me they were brand new Excelsior “free bass converters”. As an avid sight-reader of sheet music whose early lessons imparted to me a respect for classical music, I was intrigued by the so called “free bass” systems played by the classical accordion virtuosos. So, I asked Vince whether these could be fitted to my Excelsiola. Eureka.... not unexpectedly, my Excelsiola, which was made in New York, had the identical bass side to the granddaddy Excelsior from Italy....it didn't have the “Magnante Model” logo insert, but it was an exact fit!

I relished the time talking with Vince while he repaired my accordion. That alone was reason to have my accordion converted to free bass. Long story short, I soon had a free bass accordion and retired my Stradella bass engine to a shelf in my closet. And, I did apply the free bass – not to classical music, but to a rendition of *Orange Blossom Special* and with a dueling banjo intro, both parts having some fancy left-hand work and taking advantage of the multiple octaves on the left hand. This free bass converter, as it was called, had the capability to switch from one specific free bass fingering system to standard Stradella (hence the name ‘converter’). It was my first serious venture away from bass-chord-chord (that’s how you spell “oom-pa-pa” in accordion language) type playing.

Well, I was about to write that for most of my life, I had only one accordion. That was my perspective when I began writing this. But, I am reminded that, years after modifying my Excelsiola, I bought a used, but pristine, non-name-brand accordion – a lesser known “Philharmonic Continentale” - on one of my annual treks visiting my sister where I grew up. After traveling there with my Excelsiola several times, it was more convenient to have an accordion there to play for gatherings with local musicians when I visited and to continue my practice regimen in travel when I was preparing for an upcoming performance.

And, oh, then in the 1960s, while working as an engineer near phoenix AZ, and while on a week-long seminar in LA, I bought an Austrian-made diatonic button accordion from the Estonian Consul in LA. I love the sound of those things. In fact, because I spent all my cash on that accordion, I had to call off a date with beautiful girl from Phoenix who was studying in LA. Well, the truth is I was content to sit in my hotel room at night and learn to play that accordion! (That’s how you spell ‘accordion geek’! I can think of at least one famous accordionist who, posthumously, would not be proud of me.) I wonder in which closet that accordion is now!? I barely remember how to play the four songs I taught myself that night.

And, that reminds me of the accordion my roommate picked up for me at a pawn shop. When I returned home to Phoenix from my LA trip with the button box, I was surprised to learn that my roommate – who was the drummer in my polka band – had found a “good deal he couldn’t pass up” on an old, but still playable, bandoneon from East Germany. He was certain that it fit my description in earlier conversations when I had talked about acquiring a button box! I never learned to play that bandoneon, and it still adorns a shelf as a dust collector and conversation piece. Oh well, there is more to that story.

Editors note: Joe’s memoir began in May 2018, and will be continued in segments in upcoming newsletters.

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Lynn Ewing and Pamela Tom Attended the Palmer Festival/World Accordion Day - AWAM

By Pamela Tom

Photo Credit: Hanni Wrencher (with permission from AWAM)

The World Accordion Day Orchestra (conducted by Tracey Gibbens) performed an international set of more than a dozen popular folk tunes and concluded with *Aloha Oe*. The *Aloha Oe* melody is based on an old Croatian tune that represented two cultures at the conclusion of the program which included accordions, ukuleles, dancers, electronic effects and lei distribution.

The 6th Annual Willard A. Palmer Festival was held at the A World of Accordions Museum (AWAM) in Superior, WI. Kevin Friedrich posted an excellent summary of the combined accordion events on the Coupe Mondiale web site at: http://www.accordions.com/cia/cia_wad_18_reviews.php#usa

For a listing of past World of Accordion Day events worldwide visit: http://www.accordions.com/cia/cia_wad_general.php

Next year's combined 7th Annual Willard A. Palmer Festival and World Accordion Day at the AWAM is planned for May 4-5, 2019. Join the e-mail notification list to receive information on future accordion events in hosted by AWAM: <http://www.worldofaccordions.org/visit.html>



The **2018 World Accordion Day Orchestra** performed on May 6, 2018 at **A World of Accordions Museum (AWAM)** in Superior, WI with **Lynn Ewing** in the top row (3rd from the right top row, next to SFAC frequent guest soloist/composer, **Stas Venglevski**) and **Pamela Tom** (3rd from the right, first row of accordionists).



The San Francisco Accordion Club T-shirts will be perfect for summer travel. Send us your travel photographs exhibiting your new SFAC shirt for us to publish in the newsletter.

The above is one example from this year's Memorial Day auto show. Vintage Packard is not included with priceless T-shirt.

Member **Ray Celentano** kindly donated this lovely *Pollina* accordion to the club at the May event. Proceeds from the sale of this very generous donation will be used to further the activities and mission of the club.

Thank you so much, Ray!!



Welcome New SFAC Members!

The SFAC would like to welcome our newest members, **Paul and Linda Henning**, from lovely San Ramon, in Contra Costa County. Paul favors oldies and standards, and Linda prefers classical music. They found out about our club by visiting our website. We should make it a regular practice to invite fellow accordion-lovers to visit our webpage, which Randy has been renovating just recently.

Thanks to our Donors!

Sincere Thanks to those who generously donate to the Club. We would like to thank the following regular and lifetime members who enclosed a donation during the past renewal campaign (October 2017- September 2018 membership year):

Chris & Tor Arild, Evelyn Baulch, Dave Braun, Ray Celentano, George Chavez, the Coopersteins, William DeMichelis, Aldo Didero, Lynn and Gail Ewing, Ed Gorzynski Jr., Dominic Granelli, Johan & Marja Gullmes, Ron & Mary Jo Harris, Lou Jacklich, Bruce Kirschner MD, Gwyn Lister, the Lucchesis, Michael A. Marotta Jr., Deena McLemore, James Monfredini, Frank Montoro, Anna Nicora, Colette Ogata, Kay Patterson, Joe Petosa, Yakov Puhachevsky, Diana Purucker, Vincent Rinaldi, Leslie Robertson, Alexander Roitman, Ed Salvador, Michael Sanossian, Don & Mary Savant, Allan & Judy Schwartz, Kenneth Schwartz, Richard & Leslie Selfridge, Lucy Smiell, Bill & Gloria Tapogna, Pamela Tom, Jane & Frank Tripi, Mr. & Mrs. Hilbert Werner, Barbara Winter, and Mike Zampiceni.

If you have donated and your name doesn't appear here, please contact elainedc@sbcglobal.net. We greatly appreciate your support and we want to be sure you are recognized.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR WANTED

As many of you know, Elaine Cooperstein has been doing our newsletter layout since February 2016. As much as she enjoys it, her growing responsibilities at work require her to give up – or at least share - this position as soon as possible. Volunteers knowledgeable or willing to learn Microsoft Publisher might be able to each handle one newsletter every 3 or 4 months. If you have any experience with moving things around in MS Word or PowerPoint, MS Publisher is easy to learn. The task requires minimal writing, and involves laying out content written and collected by other volunteers. For more information, contact elainedc@sbcglobal.net or 510-921-9323 .

SFAC Scholarships

The SFAC awards 2 scholarships a year to accordion students studying with teachers who are SFAC members in good standing. Preference is given to students who demonstrate dedication to pursuing the study of the accordion. Contact Mike Zampiceni for a scholarship application.

Mike Zampiceni, eclecticguy@comcast.net, 408-569-2579

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Newsletter team: Layout, Content Coordinators, Proofing, Mailing

Elaine Cooperstein, Rosemary Busher, Pamela Tom, Robert Cooperstein, Barbara Bruxvoort, Dominic Palmisano
(Positions open, volunteers needed!)

Scholarship

Mike Zampiceni (408)569-2579, eclecticguy@comcast.net

Selling the **Bell Professional Accordion** my Dad gave me when I was 12. Excellent condition; no repairs needed. I need a lighter box. \$1550 plus three free lessons. Appraised by Kimric Smythe who will gladly answer questions about it, as will I. Please see full details and photos on **Craigslist**: <https://sfbay.craigslist.org/eby/msg/d/bell-professional-accordion/6609119285.html>

Joel Weber 510.655.4398



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ACCORDION HAPPENINGS

Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration

June 21-24, 2018

Leavenworth, Washington

www.accordioncelebration.org

The Rose City Accordion Club Camp

Sunday, June 10 – to Friday, June 15, 2018.

At Silver Falls State Park Conference Center, Sublimity, Oregon. For information contact: Wayne

Tiusanen, President, Rose City Accordion Club @

(503) 263-2912 or wjtiusanen@yahoo.com

AAA 80th Anniversary Festival

July 11-15, 2018 — Alexandria, VA

www.ameraccord.com/festival.html

78th Annual ATG Festival

July 25-28, 2018 — Lisle, Illinois

Featuring: Matthias Matzke, Cory Pesaturo, Stas Venglevski, Donna Dee & Dennis Ray, Mike Alongi, and more!

www.accordions.com/atg

AAA 24th Annual Accordion Master Class

July 27-29, 2018 — New York, New York

<http://www.ameraccord.com/annualmasterclass.html>

28th Annual Cotati Accordion Festival

August 18 & 19, 2018 — Cotati, California

<https://www.cotatifest.com>

Houston Accordion Orchestra Retreat 2019

January 17-20, 2019 — Houston, Texas

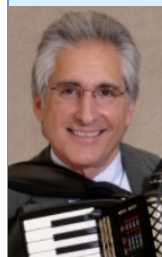
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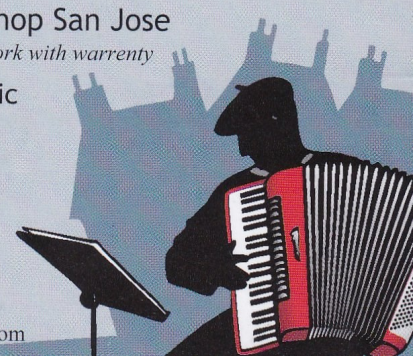
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Members may place one small ad (business-card size) free of charge for one month, once a year. Additional ads are \$10 per issue or \$100 per year.

Monthly ad prices **for members**:
1/4-page: \$25: 1/2-page: \$50: Full-page: \$100.
Non-member rates are double.

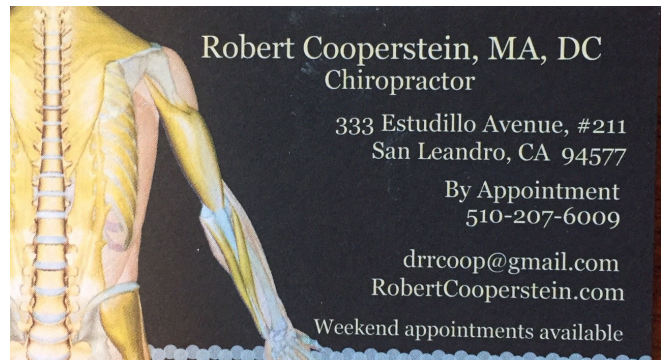
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Bay Area Accordion Clubs

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
dcdacapo@gmail.com

Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC)

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

GSAC Napa Valley Chapter (formerly Vacaville)

2nd Thursday at 6:00 pm.
The Runway Restaurant
2044 Airport Road, Napa

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

GSAC Sacramento Chapter
4th Wednesday at 6:30 pm
Elks Lodge No. 6
6446 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento

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 members, no charge under 16



◆ **Mike Zampiceni**

Sunday evenings, 6:30-9pm

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www.alpinersusa.com
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accordionpam@gmail.com

MIKE ZAMPICENI East Bay & South Bay
electicguy@comcast.net
www.mikezamp.com

ANSWER: Guess Who? (from page 3)

Joe Domitrowich!

Joe is a performing and recording musician with a passion to arrange and perform on solo digital acoustic accordion a diverse selection of music, sometimes mimicking all the instruments and the complex arrangement of a full band or entire orchestra. His repertoire ranges from Strauss to Santana ... from Monti's *Czardas* to *Mambo No. 5* ... from Brubeck to Boccherini. Joe takes pride in the fact that, despite their diversity, all his inventive and intricate arrangements – even the most complex - are played live with no use of a pre-recorded sound track; everything he plays is live. Joe has appeared as a soloist or with ensemble at the Cotati Accordion Festival, the Las Vegas International Accordion Convention, the ATG Festival, and the NAA Convention in Dallas, and with his band, **AlpinersUSA**, at huge music festivals and Oktoberfests from Pennsylvania to Texas and the Northwest as well as the SF Bay Area where he resides.

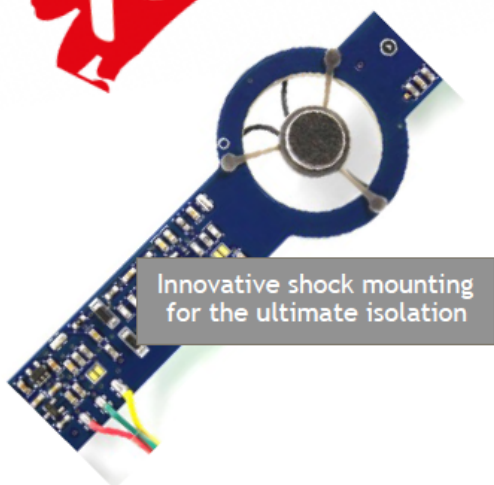


Learn more about Joe and where he performs at www.capricious-accordion.com

Also see 'How Many Accordions Are Enough' in this issue to get more of Joe's story!

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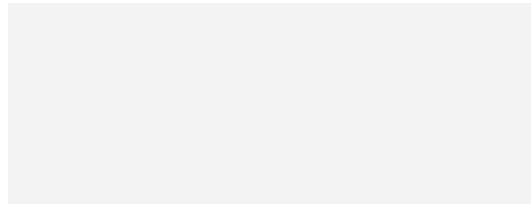
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Sunday, June 17

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2pm—4:45pm

Open Mic

The SFAC Jam Band

All are encouraged to participate!

\$5 suggested donation (Under 13 free)

Millbrae Chetcuti Community Room

Civic Center Plaza/Library Plaza

450 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae, CA



Chetcuti Community Room

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Accessible location

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