

May, 2016

A *Very Special* Music Program

Sunday, May 15, 2016

Oyster Point Yacht Club



In May: A Tribute to Jim Holliday



From left: Dominic Palmisano, Jim Holliday, Lou Soper, Rusty Bartoli, Walter Traverso

The SFAC celebrates its 26th anniversary this month, along with a memorial tribute to Jim Holliday, one of the original founders. In the tradition of musicians everywhere, we're celebrating his life and his dedication to our club with great music! **We welcome Ron Borelli and his group, Peter Di Bono and Harriet Newhart, and the Marottas from Monterey.** Come celebrate Jim's life and love of the accordion, and the 26th anniversary of the SFAC. Sit with us a spell now as we look back at the beginning of the revitalized club with heartfelt thanks to the five guys who **got things going again!**

It all began in early 1989 when a San Francisco woman named Big Lou (Linda Seekins) joined up with several other players to form a group known as *Those Darn Accordions*. Tom Torriglia, a charter member of the group, became their spokesman and publicist. Always looking for ways to publicize the accordion in general and *Those Darn Accordions* in particular, Tom and the group occasionally resorted to

wild, attention-grabbing stunts. This included *Accordionista raids* where small, uninvited groups of players, accordions at the ready, would storm into North Beach restaurants and serenade the diners into pleasant submission. He also organized a Lady of Spain-a-thon, where the hardy participants performed our love/hate anthem for ten hours straight. Tom knew he'd achieved his desired results when local newspapers began reporting on these events in featured articles.

When *Those Darn Accordions* played at a rally supporting a new ballpark for the Giants, Tom got into a conversation with San Francisco Supervisor

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SFAC origin as Bay Area Accordion Club (continued)

Mrs. Willie B. Kennedy, and mentioned the group's desire that the accordion be declared the official instrument of San Francisco. She liked the idea and agreed to officially sponsor a proposition if Tom would supply supporting documentation. Tom provided a large volume of well-researched material about the city's accordion-rich past; Mrs. Kennedy made the official presentation and motion to the Board of Supervisors in January, 1990.

Shortly thereafter an article in the San Francisco Chronicle mentioned an upcoming Board of Supervisors open meeting at City Hall regarding the official instrument question and invited any interested members of the public to weigh in on the subject. About a dozen people, mostly complete strangers, showed up and addressed the Board. Despite some strong objections from Angela Alioto on behalf of the violin (which her dad Joe played), almost all the comments were pro-accordion. The proposition won the day and our favorite instrument found its heart in San Francisco. The passed resolution went from the Supervisors to the desk of then-Mayor Art Agnos for his signature. He considered the matter too politically sensitive to act upon and didn't sign the resolution. But the City Charter provides that when a passed resolution from the Board of Supervisors is not signed, amended or withdrawn, it becomes law twelve months later. On this basis, the accordion automatically became the official instrument of San Francisco in January of 1991.

After that first Supervisors' meeting, the band of accordion brothers and sisters filed out of chambers into the rotunda. Most left after a few minutes, but five people who felt strongly connected stayed, unwilling to end the evening so soon. Walter Traverso invited the group (Rusty Bartoli, Jim Holliday, Dominic Palmisano and Lou Soper) to his house to see and play his new Midi accordion and

talk some more. They had so much fun over the next couple of hours that they decided to form an accordion club. The group jumped on the idea and decided to find a meeting place right away. The first-ever meeting of the club took place on May 7, 1990 at Woodlake Joe's in San Mateo with 25 people in attendance. One of the first pieces of business was to decide a name for the group and the Bay Area Accordion Club (now the SFAC) was born.

The club has thrived for 26 years, supporting and showcasing the talents of many fine accordion players, and encouraging new players. We thank everyone who does the necessary work to keep everything going: the entertainers, officers, volunteers, financial supporters and the faithful members who come and cheer us on with enthusiasm and affection.

Everyone is invited to attend a Celebration of the 26th Anniversary of the San Francisco Accordion Club and Tribute to Founding Member Jim Holliday on Sunday, May 15!



We are grateful to Evelyn Baulch for sponsoring the May meeting and allowing us to share in this tribute to a man whose support and generosity have helped make our Club's 26th anniversary possible.

April Meeting Report

By Mike Zampiceni

It's a rare day when exceptional accordionists converge in one location to perform. Such was the day at our April meeting when renowned, world-class artist and composer **Stas Venglevski** performed for us, along with several of the finest accordionists our club has ever featured. The result was a memorably outstanding performance in terms of content, execution, and presentation. The program featured Stas's compositions, which he played as part of his program, and the other performers played his compositions as soloists and in duets, culminating in a grand finale of all five accordionists accompanying Stas in his epic composition. This stellar accompaniment ensemble consisted of **Lynn Ewing, Grigoriy Krumik, Gail Campanella, Marian Kelly, and Jana Maas.**

To start the program, our MC for the day, **Anne Metais**, introduced our first performer of the day, **Grigoriy Krumik**, who is no stranger to our club stage. He has contributed his excellent ethnic music on his bayan several times, often with accompaniment, including a very fine Russian singer. He first played "Prelude" by Stas, a slow Russian composition in a typically minor key. He appeared to be enjoying himself while playing this dramatic, lyrical piece. Lynn joined Grigoriy in a rendition of Stas's "Generation Relation," a characteristically French-influenced waltz in C minor that both Grigoriy and Lynn played eloquently.

Jana Maas is also a repeat contributor to our stage and a familiar anchor of the Central Valley accordion scene. She is the driving force of the Stockton-based Good Time Accordion Club. As a tribute to Stas, Jana composed and played "Seconds for Stas," a waltz that she regards as a portrait of Stas's personality. The piece, which she played



superbly, humorously featured many minor 2nd intervals, the most dissonant of sounds along with the major 7th.

Lynn and **Gail Campanella**, who drove all the way from Santa Barbara for this special event, joined Jana to play the "Ecstasy Tango." Written in D minor, this tango had a shimmering quality, and a large segment featured harmonies of a 3rd between two players. Jana played the accompaniment, while Lynn and Gail played the lead parts. Astor Piazzola would have been proud of their performance.

Lynn and Gail continued as a duet and played two Venglevski compositions. "Short Visit" was a clever, syncopated waltz in E minor, again



in the French musette tradition. This bright and spirited waltz featured a descending chromatic line that Gail played, and served as a counterpoint to the melody that Lynn played. They then played "Autumn Illusions," a creatively conceived waltz in D minor that began with a question-and-answer sequence played repeatedly between the two players. This lengthy piece featured many variations on the main harmonic theme.

Gail continued as a soloist and played an impeccable rendition of "October," which Stas wrote for Jim Tobler. This briskly paced novelty piece predominantly showcased lots of fast 16th

Continued next page.....



Stas Venglevski, Grigoriy Krumik, Jana Maas, Lynn Ewing, Gail Campanella, Marian Kelly

heard from Stas. He started with a Tchaikovsky composition originally written for piano. As usual, he was relaxed and immediately established rapport with the audience, abundantly evident in his effusive stage presence. He physically moved with the emotional intent of each phrase.

notes in the first and third parts. Even a bellows shake passage was included towards the conclusion. Gail then expertly played "You've Got Gail," a ragtime piece composed for Gail by Stas, with lots of accented syncopation characteristic of the ragtime style.

Our anticipated star, **Stas Venglevski**, took center stage for the remainder of the afternoon. Stas plays a bayan, which is a chromatic accordion developed in Russia, and it's an instrument that we infrequently hear at the club other than performances from Grigoriy and the occasional artist visiting from Europe. Bayans are constructed differently than piano accordions, resulting in a brighter and higher timbre.



Stas

He kind of dances with his music, even while sitting! The next thing I noticed was the immediacy of his dynamic changes, both on this piece and the next one, which was a Brazilian tango originally conceived as a piano composition.

Stas mentioned that he had just returned from a trip to the Republic of Moldova, his birth country, so was inspired to play "Balkan Capriccio" by a Moldovan composer, which was very technically and harmonically complex. He followed this with "Lyrical Waltz" by the same composer, featuring interesting, unexpected shifting harmonies. Inspired by Gail Campanella's participation in the program, Stas's next selection, "La Campanella" (Italian for The Little Bell) by Franz Liszt, is a classic among bayanists, and was my personal favorite. This waltz features lots of fast chromatic runs in high octaves, and does sound like little bells tinkling. Stas played it seemingly effortlessly.

He played one of his compositions as a tribute to the departed luminaries in our club, such as Joe Smiell and Val Kieser. The piece was a slow, quiet, contemplative waltz in C minor. Next was "Moorka," a selection familiar to Russians, which is a crisp, uptempo novelty piece. Stas played variations on the theme, modulating to different keys as part of his improvisation, a portion of which was Baroque-like, with interesting contrapuntal interplay between the treble and bass parts. An accelerando to a fast polka capped the conclusion of this piece.



Jana

Stas is a musician's musician. A Venglevski performance exudes the utmost in precision, peerless technique, and expressive excellence, all presented in a package of dynamic verve, and this performance was as wonderful as any I've

Continued next page.....

There were other equally enthralling performances following this piece, including a duet with a bayanist acquaintance of Stas's named Dina, who appeared with Stas as a surprise guest. They played his composition entitled "January," a moderately paced European-flavored waltz and Dina's father's favorite piece, played in honor of his birthday!



Stas with guest, & new SFAC member, Dina

As final icing on the cake, the entire cast of accordionists who had played earlier, plus **Marian Kelly**, joined Stas in his "Rondo Fantasy" for bayan and orchestra, which was commissioned by the *Accordionists and Teachers Guild (ATG)*. A rondo features a repetitive prominent theme that alternates with other contrasting themes. This rondo alternated

between quiet, slow, lyrical passages and extremely brisk passages, with Stas's flying fingers playing the melody while the accompanying ensemble played a supporting rhythmic role.

Standing ovations were prevalent throughout the entire program, and after the final one following the rondo, Stas played one of his French-styled fast waltzes, brilliantly executed like everything else he performed during the afternoon.

Both Stas and the other fine accordionists were well appreciated, and we hope that Stas can make it back to regale us with his accordion mastery sooner rather than later.

Play with the Jam Band

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

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JIM HOLLIDAY

In Memoriam

The SFAC is saddened by the loss of Jim Holliday, 96, on August 7, 2015, from a sudden heart attack. Jim will be remembered as a founder of the San Francisco Accordion Club (SFAC), a Pan Am Captain, terrific dancer and all around great guy. He is survived by Evelyn, his companion of 35 years, and many friends from his years at Pan American World Airways (PanAm) and the SFAC.



Jim was born in Washington, DC in 1919, but lived most of his early life in Chicago with his mother until he graduated from high school. He excelled at swimming and diving and was active with the Sign Club that made signs for all of the high school's games and social events. His first job was with a sign company in Chicago.

Jim developed an early love of airplanes and built many finely detailed model planes as he grew up. He also fell in love with accordion music. He first heard an accordion group playing at a family picnic, and he sat and listened all day. It touched his heart and he was captivated. Although he bought an accordion and wanted to play for years, his busy flight schedule took all his time.

Jim won a scholarship competition to attend the Roscoe Turner Flight School in Indianapolis in the late 1930s. When he graduated with top honors he won another scholarship to flight instructor school, with an agreement that he would train pilots for a year after completing his own training. After this, he began applying to airlines and was hired by PanAm in 1942, beginning his 39-year career as a commercial pilot.

Jim happily took his accordion out of the closet at age 60 after retiring from PanAm in 1979, and he immediately began to take lessons. He told Evelyn how much he wished he knew someone else who played the accordion. His wish was granted a few years later when he and Evelyn met Lou and Mary Soper at an Art Van Damme concert in Napa and Jim and Lou became close friends. Lou introduced Jim to several other accordion players that he knew in the Bay area; this group became the foundation of the new club.

Jim, Lou, Dominic Palmisano, Walter Traverso and Rusty Bartoli worked with other accordion lovers to get the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to select the accordion as the city's official instrument in 1990, and they formed the Bay Area Accordion Club the same year. (The name was changed to the San Francisco Accordion Club in late 2003, with the welcome addition of new accordion clubs around the Bay.)

These same five guys also helped Jim Boggio start the annual Cotati Accordion Festival in 1990; in 2004, the five founders were chosen to be the honorary directors of the Cotati Festival. They also convinced Paul Pasquali of the need for an international accordion convention; Paul sponsored the first Las Vegas International Accordion Convention in 2000.

Jim and Evelyn volunteered time and talent to support the club for 20 years until Jim's health began to decline, but his memory lives on at the SFAC. We remember Jim with great affection and we are sorry to lose him. Jim's love of the accordion and long service to the club leave a lasting legacy; we'll be forever grateful for his vision and dedication.



Founders: Rusty Bartoli, Dominic Palmisano, Jim Holliday

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Sun Nov 6	At Sea (Rehearsal day)	Thu Nov 10	Cozumel, Mexico (10 – 6 Free)
Mon Nov 7	At Sea (Rehearsal day)	Fri Nov 11	At Sea (Rehearsal day) / Performance
Tue Nov 8	Montego Bay, Jamaica (9-6 Free)	Sat Nov 12	Galveston TX (Arrive 8:00 am)

For more information www.accordionhonors.com

E-mail: info@accordionhonors.com



SFAC Scholarships Available

The SFAC awards two scholarships a year to accordion students studying with teachers who are SFAC members in good standing. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate dedication to pursuing the study of the accordion. Contact Mike Zampiceni for a scholarship application (see contact information on page 11.)

SFAC Newsletter Ad Policy

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.

Join In the Fun!

Helping with the monthly music programs is a great way to meet new people and help 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!

Upcoming Accordion Events



26th Annual
COTATI ACCORDION FESTIVAL
 SATURDAY & SUNDAY
AUGUST 20 & 21, 2016
 9:30 AM - 8:00 PM - LA PLAZA PARK IN COTATI



BUFFALO SQUEEZE-FEST
American Accordionists' Association
July 6-10, 2016 – Buffalo, NY
 AAA Festival - Workshops, hands-on sessions, spectacular concerts, world premiere
www.ameraccord.com/festival.html for information.



Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration
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Hermann Sons Hall, 860 Western, Petaluma
Contact: Tony Mustaro, President (707) 318-0474
dcdacapo@gmail.com

Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC)

President/CEO for all three chapters:
Carole Enneking (707) 864-2359
gsaccordionclub@netfirms.com

Vacaville Chapter

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

Humboldt Chapter

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

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

Performing Around the Bay

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www.ronborelli.com

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PETER DI BONO *San Francisco* www.peterdibono.com

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JOE DOMITROWICH *South Bay* www.alpinersusa.com
or www.capricious-accordion.com

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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

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!*



Volunteers needed:

See pages 5-6 of our February Newsletter to learn about tasks, small or large, remote or on-site, that you can do to help the SFAC continue its excellent programs and activities (like this newsletter)! Contact SFAC President Lynn Ewing or a member of the board to volunteer.

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



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San Francisco Accordion Club Newsletter

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