



# AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION Newsletter

A bi-monthly publication of the American Accordionists' Association

January-February, 2016



**AAA Festival 2016**  
**July 6-10, 2016**  
**Adams Mark Hotel**  
**120 Church Street**  
**Buffalo, NY 14202**  
**Complimentary**  
**Excursion**  
**to Niagara Falls**  
**For AAA Hotel**  
**Registered**  
**Guests Only**



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American Accordionists'  
Association

## From the Editor

Welcome to the January-February 2016 edition of the AAA Newsletter.

It is my great pleasure to wish you all a very Happy New Year, and I hope that you all enjoyed a wonderful and safe Holiday Season. 2016 is already promising to be full of wonderful accordion activities showcasing the diversity of our beloved instrument. If you have an event that you would like to share with our readers, we invite you to submit the information to the contact information listed below!

Once again my sincere thanks all those that have assisted in providing news items and pictures, including your very own AAA Board of Director Rita Barnea who is always an avid supporter of the AAA Newsletter contributing a variety of news items from around the country.

Items for the March 2016 Newsletter can be sent to me at goaccordion@yahoo.com or to the official AAA e-mail address at: ameraccord1938@gmail.com. Please include 'AAA Newsletter' in the subject box, so that we don't miss any items that come in. Text should be sent within the e-mail or as a Word attachment. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg or similar file, and the larger the file size the better. We can always reduce/crop the picture if necessary, however we are unable to increase the quality from smaller pictures. The deadline for the March 2016 Newsletter will be the 25th of February 2016.

I look forward to hearing from you all with your accordion news!

Sincerely,

Kevin Friedrich – AAA Newsletter Editor



## Message from the President - Mary Tokarski

Hello there, fellow accordionists! Happy New Year! I hope it is a good one for you.

Be sure to stay tuned to the AAA website ([www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com)) – big changes are happening there with lots of updates and new posts. In addition, the AAA will launch our new YouTube Channel on or around February 20th.

Ever been to Russia? This year's Coupe Mondiale will be held in Russia for the first time ever from September 11-17, 2016. If you (or someone you know) want to participate as a contestant, the AAA will hold a Qualifying Competition for all 7 categories at the MAMTG Festival in Whippany, New Jersey on April 2nd. Check out the Coupe Mondiale website ([www.coupemondiale.org](http://www.coupemondiale.org)) for complete requirements for each division, and the AAA website for the entry forms.

More exciting news: New prizes for the Elsie M. Bennett Composition Competition – this year's first place winners will receive \$250! Full rules and regulations will be online within days, so be sure to hone up your composition skills for this event.

Plans are shaping up nicely for our Festival in Buffalo. Our "Buffalo SqueezeFest" will be an event to remember! Guest artists Grayson



Masefield, Cory Pesaturo, Ginny Mac and Alexander Sevastian with Quartetto Gelato will top the performers list! Our Gala Concert will be at a local Buffalo event center – The Tralf where we will enjoy Buffalo hospitality and experience fantastic accordion music in a contemporary concert venue.

A highlight of the Buffalo event will be the unveiling of Guy Klucsevsek's newly AAA-commissioned work for solo accordion. The World Premiere will take place on the concert at The Tralf on Friday, July 8, 2016. You don't want to miss this!

Hands On workshops and Jam sessions are in the plan for the "Buffalo SqueezeFest" so be sure to bring your accordion and learn great things from our Guest Artists – and each other!

There are more events for you to enjoy this year as well – April 17, 2016 – Lifetime Achievement Award Event for Mario Tacca at the Colonial Terrace in Cortlandt Manor, NY; the Annual Masterclass and Concert Series at the Tenri Cultural Center in NYC on July 29-31, 2016; and a Valtaro Celebration on November 26, 2016 at the Magnanini Winery, Wallkill, NY.

Don't forget the Open Meetings on April 3, 2016 at the Marriott Hotel in Whippany, NJ (3:00 p.m.), and July 10, 2016 at the Adams Mark Hotel in Buffalo, NY (9:00 a.m. at the Farewell Breakfast). This is your chance to network with artists and students alike, and contribute to our work at bringing the accordion into the 21st Century!

Hope to see you there! ■

## Dr. William Schimmel is Accordionist for 2016 Grammy Nominated Album

Dr. William Schimmel is the accordionist on the soundtrack album of "An American in Paris" which has just been nominated for a 2016 Grammy Award.

An American in Paris, the romantic story of a young American soldier, a beautiful French girl and an indomitable European city are at the heart of Broadway's musical, An American in Paris, the four-time Tony Award winning production that also earned the awards for Best Musical of the Year from both the Outer Critics Circle and the Drama League.

Tony Award winner Christopher Wheeldon directs and choreographs the remarkable company of 25 international and Broadway virtuosos as they bring the magic and romance of Paris into perfect harmony with orchestrations of unforgettable works by George and Ira Gershwin, including such classics as "I'll Build A Stairway to Paradise," "I Got Rhythm" and "The Man I Love." The show is currently running at The Palace Theatre, 1564 Broadway, New York, NY.

AAA Board of Director Dr. William Schimmel is a virtuoso accordionist, author, philosopher and composer. He received his diploma from the Neupauer Conservatory of Music and his BM, MS and DMA degrees from the Juilliard School. He has taught at the Juilliard School, Brooklyn College CUNY, Upsala College, New School University, Neupauer Conservatory (dean) and has lectured on accordion related subjects at Princeton, Columbia, Brandeis, University of Missouri, Duke University, Manhattan School of Music, the Graduate Center CUNY, Santa Clara University, The Janacek Conservatory in Ostrava, Czech Republic and at Microsoft.

Bill has performed with many of the renowned symphony orchestras in the USA and has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the Minnesota Orchestra. He is founder of the Tango Project, which, in addition to his hit recordings with them, has appeared with Al Pacino in the film: "Scent of a Woman," for which Pacino won an Oscar. The Tango Project also won the Stereo Review Album of the Year Award, received a Grammy nomination and rose to number 1 on the Billboard Classical Charts. He can be heard in other films including True Lies, Kun Dun and many others including films that he both scored and performed and a series of films for the Nature Conservancy which have won numerous prizes in documentary categories.

As a composer, he has written many commissions from concert music to Broadway and off-Broadway. He has written countless accordion pieces for himself and others including the Test Piece for the Coupe Mondiale, the accordions' most prestigious world competition. His "Portrait No. 1" for orchestra was conducted by the late Leopold Stockowski.

The Confédération Internationale des Accordionistes (CIA) awarded Dr. Schimmel the distinguished Merit Award for the AAA Master Class and Concert Series as well as his contributions to the International accordion scene and in addition, he received the American Accordionists' Association Distinguished Service Award for Fifty Years of Accordion activity and his work as Lecturer in Residence. For information on upcoming activities, please contact: billschimmel@billschimmel.com ■



## Jamie Maschler Demonstrates Accordion's Versatility

Jamie Maschler is a wonderful example of a young accordionist who is demonstrating to the world, the versatility of the accordion. Jamie is lead accordionist in Seattle's only Forró group, En Canto, which recently released their first full length album "Solti Por Jeri".

The Atlantic reports: "Carving her name in the music scene as Sanfoneira or accordionist, Jamie Maschler is among Seattle's few female lead instrumentalists. Jamie Maschler, knows the versatility of the accordion better than most. She has played the instrument since she was four and spent years perfecting and competing with pieces by such challenging classical composers as Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. She has since discovered her love of the collaborative, rock and pop musical scene. Talents like her seem to be increasingly valuable."

En Canto's recording is a result of the band's month-long exploration of Brazil last November. After visiting Ceará, the mecca of forró music, the multi-ethnic, female-led seven-piece is able to captivate audiences with traditional and inspired forró. "We love this music because of its compositional brilliance, its original grooves, and its revolutionary nature," Jamie explains. En Canto currently channels its independence into challenging stereotypes while also helping audiences expand their comfort zones. "But first and foremost, we make people dance!"

In addition to her work in En Canto, Jamie has played venues all over the United States, as well as internationally in St. Lucia, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico. Jamie is fresh off a nine city tour of Alaska with the performance group, Letters Aloud, including a performance at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Jamie's original music has been aired on the Radio in Seattle, Salvador BR, and Canada."

This year, her accordion playing will be featured in a PopCap video game. In Seattle, Jamie facilitates a full accordion studio, helping to build a next generation community of accordion artists. For more information: jamie.maschler@gmail.com ■



## Where There's A 'Will,' There's A Way!

Two and a half years ago, Will Comer's mother brought an accordion home from a co-worker who no longer played. Will, 15 at the time, immediately sensed an instrument that he could sink his teeth into. "Fortunately, my mother has always been a very helpful person in my arts. She always finds amazing ways to pursue my passion" Comer claimed.

Will's prior focus was on the piano before being drawn to the accordion by its robust physicality. I heard what you could do with the accordion, and got enthralled with it." Comer's attendance at AAA gatherings and concerts solidified his love for the accordion." The accordion is part of you. You're strapped in. It moves with your movements."

Comer contends, "Pianos and accordions both have keyboards, but that's where the similarities end. With the accordion, you actually mimic the singer with similar breathing techniques. 'And cellists... they might have to switch directions mid-phase - like pumping the accordion bellows. How soft or loud depends on how quickly you

AAA Lifetime Achievement Award Dinner Honoring

*Mario Tacca*

Sunday, April 17, 2016 • 1:00-6:00 p.m.

Colonial Terrace (Oval Room)

119 Oregon Road

Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567

See reservation form on page 11

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## Where There's A 'Will', There's A Way!

move them. It becomes much more of an extension of yourself."

Although Will picked up the accordion as a teenager, Will's traditional classical background began at a much younger age. The Wilton, CT resident has been taking piano lessons for the past 9 years, since the age of 8, continuing until today. Additionally, he has been studying accordion under the tutelage of Connecticut Accordion Association orchestra member, Sandy Zera of Fairfield, Connecticut for the past 2 years. At the age of 15, Will performed in the Litchfield Jazz Camp and Litchfield Jazz Festivals incorporating both accordion and piano. In the past three years, he also participated in the AAA summer festivals, performing in the Youth Involvement Jazz Program.

While some accordionists lean toward classical music, Will says "My specialty is jazz. Most of my repertoire is drawn from the jazzier side of The Great American Song Book - highlighting standards from Broadway theatre and Hollywood musical film." During his regular performances as cocktail pianist at Wilton's Portofino Restaurant, Will found a much deeper purpose, while becoming an avid fan of singers like Mel Torme, Frank Sinatra - as well as pop composers like Cole Porter, Jerome Kern and the Gershwins.

One of the reasons Comer loves to play jazz standards, "They are open to interpretation, providing a bare bones structure and phrasing for the musician to riff off. The tone that you convey, the dynamics, force, fluidity of the accompaniment, goals of the song - completely change by how you're feeling that day. Each time I play a song, I love it."

An enthusiastic musician, Will is very passionate regarding jazz improvisation. "When you play jazz, it doesn't matter how anyone before or after did it, its all about what you're doing that moment. 'Like a culinary chef. You know the ingredients, can throw anything in that will help the taste, colors, and overall appearance. With music, you determine what the song will sound like."

Although Will's parents have both dabbled in music, his Dad, Tom Comer admitted, "Will came to music on his own. He went off to his room teaching himself to play the harmonica in 5th grade, and taught himself from theory books beginning at a young age. You can't be a jazz musician unless you have a solid understanding of theory. He really has a love for this music. That's what keeps him motivated to keep on moving. You can see it. This is what he wants to do. It just kind of calls him. Tom Comer enjoys the perplexed enthusiasm of people who are surprised to meet a teenage musician so steeped in American standards. People of my generation are always shocked to hear my son play. It's fun to hear their reactions."

Will Comer is director of the "Evergreen Performers, a teen band of Wilton High School musicians who put their own spin on clas-

## Elsie M. Bennett Composition Competition

The 2016 Elsie M. Bennett Composition Competition and the AAA announce a new \$250 cash award for the winning composers in the competition. Below is an overview of the basic rules of the competition. Entry forms, a full set of rules and composition guides are available on the AAA website at [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com).

The general purpose of this competition is to add to the solo concert repertoire of the acoustic accordion. There is no directive for the style of the composition. Refer to the guide for composing for the standard piano accordion and links to other helpful websites posted on the AAA website [ameraccord.com](http://ameraccord.com). There will be two divisions - Junior Division for composers up to the age of 18, and an Open Division for composers of any age.

There will be first, second and third place awards presented when entries merit them. A cash award in the amount of \$250 will be presented to the first place winner in each category.

**Start Writing!** ■

sics. We have bridged the gap between ourselves and senior citizens over the past two years by sharing our gift of music by performing live at various facilities. We try to play music that everyone can relate to, not just older people, but younger people as well. Their reactions always make us feel great because they really appreciate what we're doing. It makes them happy. 'And that makes us happy.'

A senior at Wilton High School, Will is a member of their marching band, chorus and jazz ensemble. In his 'spare time', Comer entertains at restaurants, bars, cocktail parties - as well as being an active participant in the Connecticut Accordion Association orchestra. A very



promising 17 year old accordionist, Will was the featured guest artist for Connecticut Accordion Association's January 31, 2016 gathering at Vasi's Restaurant in Waterbury, Connecticut. The audience always appreciates Comer's impressive live accordion performances. How does Will do it all? Where there's a WILL, there's a way! ■



**Pictured above: Will Comer practicing for the January 31st performance. Above left, Will is pictured with his Accordion teacher, Sandy Zera of Fairfield, CT.**

*Thanks to Anita Siarkowski for contributing the article and photos and for the excellent coverage of Will's performance at the January CAA meeting.*

## Long Island Accordion Alliance

The Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) was founded by Dominic Karcic in August 2010 and the wide spread success of events has endeared accordionists and accordion music lovers from all over the New York Metro area. The LIAA has established themselves as a voice of the accordion on Long Island, and enjoys tremendous support from accordionists and general music lovers alike.

The LIAA holds monthly meetings and is open both to audience and participants. Attendees are invited to bring their instruments where they will find an atmosphere that is accepting and entertaining.

The 2016 LIAA Schedule:

- January 6th - Manny Corallo and Frank Toscano
- February 3rd - Paolo Belanich
- March 2nd - Mario Tacca & Mary Mancini



*continued on page 4*

## Long Island Accordion Alliance, cont'd from p. 3

- April 6th - Fabio and Fabio Lucarrelli
- May 4th - Mary Tokarski & Nathan Chapeton
- June 1st - Ray Oreggia & Dom Karcic
- July 6th - Greg Zukoff
- August 3rd - Smorgasbandit
- September 7th - Emilio Magnotta
- October 5th - Joe DeClemente
- November 2nd - Bud and Linda Gramer

The Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) is hosted at La Villini Restaurant located on 288 Larkfield Road, East Northport, NY. Phone: 631-261-6344. Reservations are recommended.

For more information e-mail: [dkarcic10@verizon.net](mailto:dkarcic10@verizon.net) or visit [www.facebook.com/LongIslandAccordionAlliance](http://www.facebook.com/LongIslandAccordionAlliance) ■

## MAMTG Festival - April 1-3

The Mid Atlantic Music Teachers Guild (MAMTG) will hold their annual festival April 1-3, 2016.

The Mid Atlantic Music Teachers Guild (MAMTG) was founded by a group of professional music educators from the New Jersey Tri-State area to establish and maintain high professional musical teaching and ethical standards, exchange music-related ideas, information and fellowship among colleagues, promote music education in our area, and to provide a platform for area music students to display their talents in a competitive environment.

Established in 1960, The Mid Atlantic Music Teachers Guild has been recognized as a viable musical organization throughout the entire Mid-Atlantic and New England States. Annually our Spring Music Festival for students is held in Whippany, New Jersey.

As part of the festival, the Mid Atlantic Accordion Virtuoso Championship is scheduled for Friday, April 1, 2016 at 6:00 PM. New this year for the Spring Music Festival 2016! will be the Ensembles Show Case. Students in bands, ensembles and chamber groups can perform live for an audience and receive feedback from an adjudicator. This is a non-competitive performance event to Show Case the performers' talents and musicianship!

For further information about the MAMTG Festival, please visit <http://www.mamtg.org/festival-info.html> or e-mail: [mamtg@hotmail.com](mailto:mamtg@hotmail.com)

In conjunction with the MAMTG, the American Accordion Musicological Society (AAMS) conducts their annual event including workshops and exhibits. Their 2016 Honoree is AAA Past President, Linda Soley Reed who will be honored at a Testimonial Banquet and Concert on Saturday, April 2, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Ballroom of the Hanover Marriott in Whippany, NJ. The AAMS Festival Orchestra will perform at the concert and all accordionists (past and present) are welcome to join the orchestras.

Under the direction on honoree, Linda Soley Reed, the orchestra will have one rehearsal on Saturday, April 2nd at 3:00 p.m. at the Marriott.

For a complete schedule of workshops and performances, please visit [aamsaccordionfestival.com](http://aamsaccordionfestival.com)

Also being held during the MAMTG Festival, the American Accordionists' Association will host the Coupe Mondiale Qualifying competitions on Saturday, April 2nd as well as an AAA Open Meeting on Sunday afternoon, also at the Marriott, at 3:00 p.m.

This is a busy weekend with many accordion events. Plan to be there! You won't be disappointed. ■



## AAA Seminars in New York City: No Place Like Home

The American Accordionists' Association (AAA) announces their 22nd annual Master Class and Concert Series to be held in New York City.

This year the event is titled "There's No Place Like Home" - wherever that may be: the home you left - the home you came to - the home you adopted - the home away from home - wherever it may be - There's No Place Like It - Stephen Foster (or Don Amici) got it right.

Guests are invited to join Dr. William Schimmel (moderator/curator) and friends for the 22nd smash year: Home Sweet Home - Heimat Klinger, Ne Casa Su Casa - NO PLACE LIKE HOME! where he will guide you through a maze of concepts, sounds, feelings, tastes and pieces - all by way of the accordion.

The Seminars will address the accordion's wave of popularity in the 1950's and why it went the other way. He will discuss three agendas during that time:

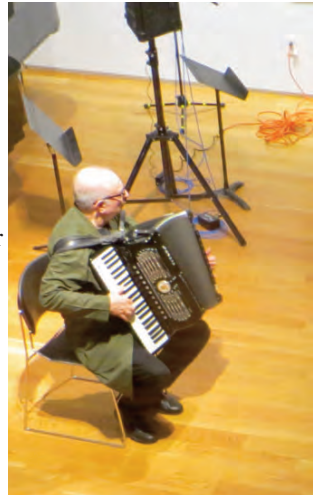
- 1 What was actually going on
- 2 Where young people were headed
- 3 Where the Accordion community wanted to take it

If you were from an ethnic community somewhere up north - all of this is a non-issue. If you lived in the mainstream of 50's popular post-war culture, it became an issue. In this realm we were Americans first, Eisenhower Americans. Wear an Accordion and your roots show. Perfectly fine today, but not back in the 1950's - Interesting!

- The accordion has a wave of popularity again, a no-brainer
- Let's go back and see what happened back then
- What is the lesson for today?
- Is there one?
- Let the accordion take you home
- Where the heart is
- Where the soul is
- Where - whatever - how - what - why
- No Place Like Home

The American Accordionists' Association (AAA) master class and concert series will be held from July 29-31, 2016 at the Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A West 13th Street, New York, NY.

Master Classes (\$25) 3:00 PM, Concerts (\$30) 7:00 PM. Full day - master class/concert tickets are available for \$50 and a week-end pass for \$125. For reservations and information: (212) 876 - 0827 or e-mail: [billschimmel@billschimmel.com](mailto:billschimmel@billschimmel.com) ■



## THE AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION MASTER CLASS & CONCERT SERIES - 2016

**No Place Like Home!**  
**DR. WILLIAM SCHIMMEL, MODERATOR**  
**JULY 29, 30 AND 31, 2016**

**Tenri Cultural Institute • 43A W13th St., NYC**

*See order form on pages 9 and 10*

## Michael Bridge In Concert

Canadian accordionist Michael Bridge will perform in Toronto in February when he appears with the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra performing the Concerto by Paul Creston. He will also appear in concert with Prof. Joseph Macerollo (accordion) and Hector del Curto, Argentina (bandoneon) as part of the Soundstreams "Squeezebox" performance.

Michael Bridge has performed in China, Croatia, Italy, France, the U.K., and across the USA and Canada. He made his solo orchestral debut with the Boston Pops at age 17 and performs classical, contemporary classical, folk, jazz, rock and pop music on acoustic accordion, digital accordion, and piano.

Michael is a graduate student in classical accordion performance at the University of Toronto, studying with Professor Joseph Macerollo. His former teachers include Beverley Fess (accordion), Donna Holoboff (piano), and composers Timothy Janz and Robert Rosen (theory, history and composition). He won the University of Toronto Concerto Competition (2015), the Calgary Stampede Talent Search (2013), and is a two-time Canadian Digital Accordion Champion (2013, 2011). He placed 2nd at the Digital Accordion World Championships (2013) and 4th at the Junior World Accordion Championships (2011).

Michael has collaborated with both Quartetto Gelato and Bellows and Brass (as a substitute member), the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra (Nov. '15), the Ontario Philharmonic, the I.C.O.T. Orchestra, the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra (date TBA), the Euphonia Chamber Orchestra, Soundstreams, Fawn Opera, Barrie Concerts (Oct. '15), TEDx Talks, The Chopin Society, the Royal Conservatory of Music contemporary music ensemble, Ladam Ensemble, The Collective, the Alex Meixner Band, the Crystal Plamondon Band, The Lizzy Hoyt Band, the Doll Sisters, Joseph Johnson (cello), Joseph Macerollo (accordion), Kornel Wolak and Peter Stoll (clarinet), Ivana Santilli, Melanie Conly, Maeva Palmer and Conrad Siebert (voice), Larnell Lewis, Dan Barton and Norm Bergeron (percussion), Marek Majewski and Michael Savona (classical guitar), and Alicia Baker, Cory Pessatureo and Mario Pedone (accordion).

Along with Dr. Kornel Wolak (clarinet and piano), Michael is a founding member of DOUBLE-DOUBLE DUO – a high-energy and technologically advanced show with upcoming performances from Ecuador to Poland. Bridge has been a full-time member of Ladam Ensemble since 2014 – an acoustic Iranian-Serbian-Classical quartet based out of Toronto.

Michael has adjudicated accordion competitions in the USA and Canada, and has given Master Classes in Virginia, West Virginia, Illinois, Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Alberta and Ontario. In 2010, he was a theory instructor at the CASSA (Calgary Arts Summer School Association) summer program for youth.

## John Torcello with the Los Angeles Philharmonic

John Torcello, former World Accordion Champion will perform the accordion role in the upcoming performance of Correspondances by Henri Dutilleux with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the direction of Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The 22 minute work Correspondances is a song-cycle for soprano and orchestra written by the French composer Henri Dutilleux in 2002–2003. It consists of five episodes and an interlude. The work was premiered by Simon Rattle and Dawn Upshaw with the Berliner Philharmonic on September 5, 2003 and has since been performed all over the world.

Correspondances consists of five movements based on various letters and poems as well as an interlude. The title refers both to letter writing and to synaesthesia in the Baudelairean sense i.e. sym-

Some of Michael's most surprising and unusual performance credits include a TEDx Talk, playing on a float in the Calgary Stampede Parade to a live audience of 300,000, improvising live silent film accompaniments to films by Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, premiering the first-ever chamber works written with digital accordion through Fawn Opera, playing polka-rock fusion shows at Texas' wildly popular Wursthfest, and performing an accordion solo on stage with The Barenaked Ladies in 'If I Had \$1,000,000.'

Over the past decade, Michael has recorded and produced 7 folk albums and 1 classical album (including two albums of his own compositions). As a collaborator, he has recorded two albums with Alicia Baker for the Baker-Bridge Duo, and was featured on Grammy-nominated artist Alex Meixner's album Happiness Is a Choice. Concert details were as follows:

February 4, 2016 - University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra  
Paul Creston Accordion Concerto  
Winner of the U of T Concerto Competition  
MacMillan Theatre, Faculty of Music,  
University of Toronto, 7:30 PM

February 10, 2016 - Soundstreams presents "Squeezebox"  
Prof. Joseph Macerollo and Michael Bridge, Canada (accordions)  
Hector del Curto, Argentina (bandoneon)  
Gamin, Korea (saengwang)  
Featuring a world premiere by Anna Pigdorona  
Trinity St. Paul's Centre - Toronto ON, 8:00 PM



bolic "correspondences" between the senses and the world.

It is based on texts by Rainer Maria Rilke, Prithwindra Mukherjee, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Vincent van Gogh. Although they come from disparate sources, they are unified by their mystical inspiration and especially their concern about the place of humanity in the Cosmos.

Each episode highlights a particular family of instruments. For instance, woodwinds and brass are prominent in De Vincent à Théo..., echoing the painter's use of colour while the accordion and strings dominate in A Slava et Galina (that letter was addressed to legendary cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife, soprano Galina Vishnevskaya). Danse Cosmique, opens with timpani and pizzicato strings before the whole orchestra surrounds the singer.

## Torcello with LA Philharmonic, cont'd from p. 5

The work contains quotations from Modest Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov as well as Dutilleux's own *Timbres, espace, mouvement* in Solzhenitsyn's letter and van Gogh's respectively and it was recorded by Esa-Pekka Salonen and Barbara Hannigan (for whom the composer wrote a new finale) with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in 2013.

- I Gong I (Rilke)
- II Danse cosmique (Mukherjee)
- Interlude
- III A Slava et Galina... (Soljenitsyne)
- IV Gong 2 (Rilke)
- V De Vincent à Théo (Van Gogh)

A noble man who participated in the French Resistance during the Second World War, Henri Dutilleux was, with Messiaen, one of the two true heirs to the grand tradition established by his predecessors Fauré, Ravel, Dukas, and Debussy. But these composers in turn inherited the aesthetic principals bequeathed to them by the incandescent poet Charles Baudelaire. Both Fauré and Debussy set poetry by Baudelaire, and Ravel cultivated the idea of the Baudelairean dandy in both his life and art. Like Ravel, Dutilleux was a fastidious composer who refused to court easy popularity. Dutilleux composed slowly and meticulously: he was undisturbed if a score took twenty years to complete. In other words, he valued perfection over facility, elegance over prolificacy, and the lapidary over the ephemeral.

So it comes as no surprise to learn that Dutilleux's ravishing song cycle *Correspondances* was commissioned by the Berliner Philharmoniker in 1983 and premiered in its final form on September 5, 2003 - twenty years later. Dedicated to Dawn Upshaw and Sir Simon Rattle, *Correspondances* is a Baudelairean score filled with subtle connections between music, literature, and painting. As the composer noted, "The work's general title, *Correspondances*, beyond the different meanings that could be given to this word, refers to Baudelaire's famous poem, 'Correspondances,' and to the synaesthetics he himself evoked." The opening lines of Baudelaire's poem may well provide a clue to Dutilleux's music: "Nature is a temple where living pillars / Let escape sometimes confused words."

As Baudelaire's aesthetic of synaesthesia, the blending of sensory stimuli and responses, included the visual as well as the auditory, Dutilleux likewise followed Baudelaire's example by evoking painting through setting a text drawn from a letter written by Vincent Van Gogh to his devoted brother Théo: "I go outside in the night to paint the stars, to feel the stars and the clear infinite shining heavens above." Indeed, during this movement, Dutilleux, himself the grandson of a distinguished painter, quotes from his orchestral score *Timbres, espace, mouvement ou La Nuit étoilée* (1978), a work that was inspired by Van Gogh's magnificent painting "Starry Night."

Beginning to play the accordion at age 7, John Torcello was a stu-

dent of Al Cirrillo at Roxy's Music Store in Batavia, NY. His subsequent studies were with the great accordionist and an early proponent of the chromatic free bass instrument, Joseph Robusto; who subsequently introduced John to the late, great jazz accordionist Russ Messina in Buffalo, NY.

It was under Messina's tutelage that John Torcello became the USA - ATG Champion in 1971 and 1972. John travelled to compete in the CIA Coupe Mondiale in Bruges, Belgium, where he attained 3rd place, and then one year later, went on to win the coveted Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships held in Caracas, Venezuela. John later completed his undergraduate Music Composition degree at the University of Toronto where he studied accordion with Joseph Macerollo.

John went on to become an accomplished classical accordionist, playing venues including the Hollywood Bowl, Dorothy Chandler Music Center and the Walt Disney Concert Hall among others. Torcello often plays with orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic as well as for other important musical events.

Career highlights for John include appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Pasadena Pops/Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Long Beach Opera, Jacaranda Music and Idyllwild Arts Orchestra under conductors including Michael Tilson Thomas, Simon Rattle, Zubin Mehta, Andreas Mitsek, Rachel Worby, Carl St. Clair, John Williams, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Gustavo Dudamel in works by composers including DelTredici, Berg, Ades, Weill, Piaf, Kagel, Ortiz, Golijov, Bernstein, Piazzolla, Shostakovitch, Dean, Eötvös, Romer and Zappa.

A regular session musician, he has served as a recording musician on major motion picture scoring sessions; films including *Ice Age 4*, *Willard*, (remake) and *Major Dundee* (re-Score/re-Record). In addition, he has worked as a sideline and recording musician on various TV/Film productions including: "Knot's Landing", "Hart to Hart", "Love Boat", and "The Young and the Restless".

Several of John Torcello's recordings have been re-released including: *TORCELLO Music of the Baroque*, *TORCELLO State of the Art Accordion and Pastiche* - John Torcello and Anthony Brazier (Flute), all of which are available on Amazon.com. ■



## United States Air Force Strings in Concert

National Archives on January 28th. Under the direction of Maj. David Alpar the renowned group presented works including "A Moorside Suite" by Gustav Holst, "Italian Serenade" by Hugo Wolf and Serenade No. 3 by Robert Fuchs.

Master Sgt. Frank J. Busso Jr. is the accordionist with the Air Force Strings, The United States Air Force Band, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C. Originally from Staten Island, New York, his Air Force career began in 2005.

Frank attended Boston University and received a Bachelor of Sci-

ence degree in business administration in 2001. He studied accordion with Frank Busso Sr. at the Staten Island Music School in New York. Prior to joining the Air Force, Busso was an instructor and arranger with the Boston University Athletic Bands. He was also an instructor at the Staten Island Music School, where his students earned many regional and national titles in competition.

As a competitive accordionist, Busso received numerous regional titles from the Accordion Teachers Association of New Jersey, including the organization's virtuoso championship in 1995. He also

*continued on page 7*

## USAF Strings in Concert, cont'd from p. 6

earned multiple national titles from the American Accordionists' Association in classical, popular, and ethnic competitions. Since 2001, Busso has performed in concert as a member of The Busso Trio at numerous summer festivals hosted by the American Accordionists' Association and the Accordionists & Teachers Guild, International (ATG). ■



## "Weird Al" Yankovic fronts NAMM Rally

The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation invites music teachers, college students studying music, and the entire music industry to join efforts to keep music education strong. Accordionist "Weird Al" Yankovic and the renowned Canadian Brass headlined the NAMM Foundation's Grand Rally for Music Education on Saturday, January 23.

Throughout the year, the NAMM Foundation worked towards a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught culminating in a rally before the almost 100,000 members that gathered for the recent NAMM convention in Los Angeles.

With the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now including "music" as part of a well-rounded education, 2016 will be an exciting year for school music. The NAMM Foundation's Day of Service, Generation Next, Music Education Days, Grand Rally for Music Education, and Celebration of Music Education in association with the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus 'Imagine Party' held at the NAMM Nissan Grand Plaza Stage, energized the industry to move boldly toward our shared vision for music learning.

"We are thrilled to include our nation's leading music educators and aspiring college music students as part of the global music industry gathering at the NAMM Show," said Mary Luehrsen, NAMM Foundation Executive Director. "Through a wide variety of events, we hope to inspire those on the front line of music making with new ideas and connections that will create even more music makers well into the future."

The inaugural Grand Rally for Music Education saluted school music and all of those who make it possible. The rally featured accordionist and GRAMMY-winning artist and actor-producer-director "Weird Al" Yankovic, along with internationally acclaimed Canadian Brass.

Educators and Music faculty joined new lightning-round networking sessions, featuring tips, tricks and new practices to engage music students in the classroom while NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond hosted a roundtable discussion to engage college students planning for a career in the music industry.

*continued on page 8*

## Stas Venglevski to perform at the World of Accordions Museum

On April 3, 2016, renowned accordionist Stas Venglevski will present a recital at the Hanni Strahl Concert Hall at the World of Accordions Museum in Superior, WI.

His artistry, dazzling technical command, and sensitivity have brought Stanislav, "Stas," Venglevski, a native of the Republic of Moldova, part of the former Soviet Union, increasing acclaim as a virtuoso of the Bayan. A two-time first prize winner of Bayan competition in the Republic of Moldova, Stas is a graduate of the Russian Academy of Music in Moscow where he received his Masters Degree in Music under the tutelage of the famed Russian Bayanist, Friedrich Lips. In 1992 he immigrated to the United States.

Stas is an Accordionist, a Musician, an Arranger, an Entertainer, a composer and a Teacher. Stas' repertoire includes his original compositions, a broad range of classical, contemporary and ethnic music. He has toured extensively as a soloist throughout the former Soviet Union, Canada, Europe, and the United States, including numerous performances with Doc Severinsen, Steve Allen and with Garrison Keillor on the Prairie Home Companion Show. Additionally, he has performed with symphony orchestras throughout the United States. He performed the world premiere of Concerto No. 2 by Anthony Galla-Rini and also the world premiere of Bayan and Beyond, composed for Stas by Dan Lawitts. He is a regular participant of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Arts in Community Education Program (ACE); has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra; has done television commercials and performed in theater productions; produced numerous recordings including a transcription of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite for Bayan as well as one of original compositions. He has published several books of original compositions.

Stas founded Accordion XXI Century Series in 2010 so that the Midwest audiences can experience the amazing range of the Accordion and Bayan by bringing gifted artists from all over the world. In a concert setting, these gifted musicians share their skills and cultures to provide the audience with a unique musical experience. The performances feature the Accordion or Bayan in solo presentation and, when possible, in concert with other instruments.

For more information on this and other upcoming events at the World of Accordions Museum, please visit [www.worldofaccordions.org](http://www.worldofaccordions.org). ■



Stas Venglevski



"Weird Al" with NAMM with Mary Luehrsen, NAMM Foundation Executive Director

## Weird AI, cont'd from p. 7

On January 24 all musicians were welcomed to play in a multi-instrument parade as preparation for the global Make Music Day celebrations on June 21 which are held alongside the Recreational Music Making Forum featuring Gay Hanna of the Center for Creative Aging.

At events including the NAMM Foundation Grand Rally for Music Education, during nightly NAMM Nissan Grand Plaza Stage performances, and with giving opportunities throughout the NAMM show, all members of the music industry were encouraged to contribute to the NAMM Foundation's new 'Believe in Music' Fund. As rally leader, "Weird AI" Yankovic talked with Mary Luehrsen, executive director of the NAMM Foundation during this first annual the Grand Rally for Music Education, his live interview revealing that without music education, he wouldn't have been rocking an accordion!

During an interview with Kelli Fadroski, a reporter for the Orange County Register "Weird AI" said "the choices were guitar and accordion. My parents, being the visionaries that they are, chose the accordion."

"Weird AI" emphasized how an early music education had a profound impact on his almost 40-year career. His first accordion lesson was the day before his seventh birthday where he described it as like trying to "pat your head and rub your belly at the same time." After three years of lessons at an accordion school in South Gate, "Weird AI" Yankovic, now 56, decided to learn more on his own.

"Weird AI" told reporter Fadroski "When you take accordion lessons, they're not teaching you 'Stairway to Heaven,'" he said. "At the time it was polka and classical music, which there's nothing wrong with either of those, but I was a teenager and I wanted to learn how to rock out on my accordion." As an architecture student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Yankovic also recorded "My Bologna," his parody of the Knack's "My Sharona." From there, things took off. He said he attempted to write "normal" songs, but he just wasn't wired that way.

The NAMM Grand Rally audience included thousands of music teachers, administrators, music students and NAMM members, and featured performances by internationally acclaimed quintet Canadian Brass, students from the Huntington Beach Academy for the Performing Arts and CHAMPS Charter High School of the Arts in Van Nuys (pictured), which covered a handful of Yankovic's songs such as "Word Crimes," "Tacky," "Eat It" and "Spam."

Jamie Knight, director of the Music Media and Entertainment Technology program and department chair of the Huntington Beach High School for Visual Performing Arts told reporter Fadroski that "Weird AI" Yankovic is definitely a great inspiration for his students. ■



"Weird AI" Yankovic



CHAMPS performing at NAMM Grand Rally

## Joan Grauman donates all proceeds from CD sales to AAA youth programs

AAA governing board member Joan Grauman recorded her first solo CD this past fall. Although she had been to recording studios on many occasions over the years playing accordion parts for documentaries and other musicians' CDs, she had never entertained thoughts of creating a CD of her own. Then, her daughter Emily married excellent recording engineer Don Godwin, and Don began working at a studio close to Joan's home in Maryland. Joan's husband Dan said, "You need to do a solo CD now – you are not getting any younger!" Joan still hesitated. "Do it for our grandchildren," Dan urged. So, Joan reluctantly agreed, but only after deciding that 100% of the proceeds would go toward providing lunches for the participants in the AAA's Youth Orchestra and Youth Involvement Program.



These relatively new AAA youth programs are very special to Joan who is thrilled with the growing number of kids participating each year. "They come to the festivals to compete, to attend rehearsals and to perform. It's important to me that they also have time to socialize and become friends." So, in 2012, Joan began holding music flea markets at the Washington Metropolitan Accordion Society (WMAS) meetings each holiday season, and donating all of the proceeds to help pay for lunches for these young musicians at the annual AAA festivals. "The children rehearse in the mornings and then enjoy



lunch together in a room set aside for them at each festival. It's terrific to hear these young people from all over the US and Canada chatting and laughing together – and hopefully forming lifelong friendships."

The production of this CD was a family affair. Along with Joan and son-in-law Don, daughter Emily accompanied on drums and husband Dan created the CD layout. The CD was completed in early November, and by mid-December Joan had sold enough CDs to donate \$520 plus \$116 from the flea market, for a total of \$636 so far.

The Youth Involvement Program was developed in 2011 by AAA Board Member, Marilyn O'Neil, in an effort to outreach in a unique way to young accordionists and peers who play other instruments. The program engages them in making music together, demonstrating the diversity of the accordion and introducing it to youth who have never been exposed to the instrument. Young accordionists get to integrate their accordion experience with peers who are playing instruments (sax, trumpet, trombone, bass, etc.) that are typically seen and heard in formal programs in the public school system. Our accordionists don't get these opportunities. Nor do they typically get the chance to play jazz, classical, or rock music in these settings where it's encouraged.



Mitch Guido joined the Youth program in 2013 and will conduct this year's jazz group.

Now they can!

Since 2011, the Youth Involvement Program has been very successful at introducing our young accordionists to the world of jazz. We've reached non-accordionist musicians in Charleston, Baltimore, Alexandria and New York. The program's structure allows for all kinds of music, so the future of this program and the potential for reaching out to young musicians of any persuasion is exciting and limitless. ■





## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

There's no place like home – wherever that may be: the home you left – the home you came to – the home you adopted – the home away from home – wherever it may be – THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE IT – SPEPHEN FOSTER (or Don Amici) GOT IT RIGHT.

Join us for our 22nd smash year: Home Sweet Home – Heimat Klinger, Ne Casa Su Casa, etc., etc., etc. – NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

Dr. Schimmel will once again be your guide through a maze of concepts, sounds, feelings, tastes and pieces – all by way of the accordion.

The Accordion had a wave of popularity in the 1950's. Why did it go the other way? There were three agendas during that time: 1) What was actually going on; 2) Where young people were headed; 3) Where the Accordion community wanted to take it.

If you were from an ethnic community SOMEWHERE UP NORTH – all of this is a non-issue.

If you lived in the mainstream of 50's popular postwar culture, it became an issue. In this realm we were Americans first, Eisenhower Americans. Wear an Accordion and your roots show. Perfectly fine today, but not back in the 1950's – INTERESTING.

Let's go back and see what happened!

What is the lesson for today?

Let the Accordion take you home, where the heart is, where the soul is.

WHERE – WHATEVER – HOW – WHAT – WHY





**American  
Accordionists'  
Association**

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# AAA Lifetime Achievement

*Honoring Mario Tacca*

**Sunday, April 17, 2016**

**1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

*Colonial Terrace*

*Oval Ballroom*

119 Oregon Road

Cortlandt Manor, New York 10567

*Featuring Guest Artists*

*Emilio Magnotta*

*Beverly Roberts Curnow*

*Mary Tokarski*

*Frank Toscano & Manny Corallo*

*and*

*Special Guest*

*Uncle Floyd Vivino*

*as well as*

*a performance by*

*Mario Tacca & Mary Mancini*



## *Menu*

Cocktail Hour Buffet

Pasta Station, Antipasto, As-  
sorted Cheeses & Crudites,  
Chicken, Seafood Cioppino,  
Sliced Steak

*Dinner Choices*

*selected same day include:*

Prime Rib • Stuffed Chicken Breast  
Seafood Entree • Vegetarian  
Dessert and Coffee

Children under 5 - no charge

Children under 12 dinner choices  
to be ordered same day.

Complimentary Beer, Wine and  
Soda throughout the event.

*Anyone requiring special diet or  
allergy restrictions*

*are requested to contact Colonial  
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**RESERVE NOW!** Donation of \$75.00 per person includes unlimited beer, wine and soda, appetizer buffet, complete dinner including dessert and coffee. Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (at \$75.00 per person); children under 12 (\$35.00) made payable to the AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION for \_\_\_\_\_ attendees or charge my credit card below:

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Full page - \$90 \_\_\_\_\_; Half page - \$50 \_\_\_\_\_; Quarter page - \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

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Mail to:

**AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION**

**Attention: Julie Cardona**

**67 Sackett Point Road, Apt. 215 • North Haven, CT 06473**

**aaa1938@gmail.com**

**Please RSVP  
on or before  
April 1, 2016**

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## Coast to Coast

*...a sampling of accordion events across the USA!  
Contact the individual organizations for updates.*



### Lisle (Chicago), IL

The Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG) will host their 76th Anniversary festival from July 20-23, 2016 at the Hyatt Lisle, Lisle (Chicago) IL with an array of Competitions, Exhibits, Workshops and Concerts featured. For more information, please visit [www.accordions.com/atg](http://www.accordions.com/atg)

### Kansas City, MO

The University of Missouri - Kansas City (UMKC) Chamber Accordion Ensemble will present a concert on Sunday June 26, 2016 at 2:00 PM in Pierson Auditorium on the UMKC Campus.

All players are alumni of the University of Missouri - Kansas City, and former members of the renowned UMKC Accordion Orchestra. The players make their living in various careers, but each have remained devoted to promoting the accordion and its varied repertoire, which includes transcriptions, commissions and other original works. The UMKC Chamber Accordion Ensemble under the direction of Joan C. Sommers, has recently performed in Chicago, San Francisco and Kansas City. For more information please contact Director Joan Cochran Sommers:  
[joansommers@kc.rr.com](mailto:joansommers@kc.rr.com)

### Richardson (Dallas), TX

The National Accordion Association (NAA) will host their 29th annual festival at the Hyatt Regency Hotel (Richardson, TX) from March 10-12, 2016. With a focus on Continuing Education for Accordionists, the NAA has enacted a three-year plan with "Lifelong Learning" and having fun as primary purposes for their conventions. The National Accordion Association and El Centro College are partnering to offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) of credit for conventioners. Conventioners may now earn CEU credits for learning, participating, performing, and having fun during the annual convention. Optional Certificate: Interested conventioners participating in a minimum of ten one-hour sessions will earn 1.0 Continuing Education Credit during the convention. The certificate can be redeemed at the completion of the convention. For more information, please visit: <http://accordions.com/naa/>

### Las Vegas, NV

The 17th Annual Las Vegas International Accordion Convention will be held from August 8-11, 2016 at the Gold Coast Hotel. Guests will include Alexander Sevastian, Joey Miskulin, Mario Pedone, Kim and Dan Christian, AAA President and International soloist Mary Tokarski, Gina Brannelli, Gordon Kohl, Pete Barbutti and Joan Cochran Sommers who will conduct the Las Vegas International Accordion Festival Orchestra. For more information, please visit [www.accordionstars.com](http://www.accordionstars.com)



UMKC Chamber Accordion Ensemble

## AAMS Festival - April 1-3 – Marriott Hotel – Whippany, NJ

AAMS has just released its festival itinerary, including WORKSHOPS, CONCERTS, HONOREE BANQUET, FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA and more.

Do not miss the exciting Friday Night Irish Experience Concert featuring the Irish Accordion and Guitar Duo of John McGillian and Darin Kelly. Also appearing Bob & Anita Siarkowski, Dee Langley, Irish Madrigals, Westmont Accordion Club and the WPAO all with totally Irish programs. Lou Persic will provide pre-concert music beginning at 7:30 PM for the non Irish.

Saturday evening will present AAMS Guest Of Honor, Linda Soley Reed, who will conduct the AAMS Festival Orchestra 2016. Everyone is invited to participate in the orchestra. Contact Linda Reed at [lsoleyreed@gmail.com](mailto:lsoleyreed@gmail.com) or Joanna Darrow ([acmeaccordion@comcast.net](mailto:acmeaccordion@comcast.net)) for music. Pre-Dinner music will be provided by Don Gerunda, Dinner Music by Lou Coppola and the Strolling Strings. Joe Natoli, Mary Tokarski, and Eddie Montiero and the WPAO will captivate your attention with exciting performances throughout the evening.

Workshops will begin Friday evening with "Jigs, Reels, Politics & Religion!" presented by Bob Lijana and Dean Ratzin. Saturday

workshops include Paul Ramunni with "Secrets of the Accordion - What Makes the Instrument so Special," followed by Dallas Vietty 'Playing Off the Page', Joe Natoli with "Inexpensive Studio Quality Recording at Home."

Music Educator Anthony Mazzocchi, GRAMMY® nominated music educator, and Linda Soley Reed, 2-hour Festival Orchestra Rehearsal at 3:00 p.m. (evening performance). Sunday workshops are Paul Ramunni "Secrets of the Accordion - Part 2," Dee Langley - Part One: Using Your Ear to Memorize Melody, and Part Two Using your Ear to Memorize Harmony; Anthony Mazzocchi Part Two .

All attendees of the AAMS are invited to attend an Open Meeting of the AAA held at 3 PM on Sunday, April 3.

*A fabulous time will be had by all.*

*For more information contact  
Joanna Darrow 856-854-6628  
[acmeaccordion@comcast.net](mailto:acmeaccordion@comcast.net), or  
[aamsaccordionfestival.com](http://aamsaccordionfestival.com).*

*See you there!*