



Newsletter



What's inside...

This issue of the newsletter contains additional information regarding the AAA Festival in Alexandria, including the registration form as well as information regarding hotel accommodations and deadlines and the new "Honors" categories for soloists.

The ladies take front and center stage in this issue. See articles on Rita Barnea, Lidia Kaminska, Mary Ann Covone, Amy Jo Sawyer, Joan Sommers and Mary Tokarski,

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What's New at Festival 2020 in Alexandria!

AAA Announces New Competition Categories for Festival 2020

AAA Honors Categories

This year's AAA Competition will feature the addition of the newly created Honors Categories! 1st, 2nd and 3rd place trophies will be awarded in these divisions – and – the 1st place winner in each division will receive a cash award!

Each contestant in the Honors Category will be required to perform TWO selections; one from the "Required Repertoire" list, and a piece of their own choice for the second. Music for the choice selection can be Open, Classical or Originals Written for Accordion – no Pop or Jazz. All other rules from the open categories will apply.

The categories will consist of: Juniorette (up to 8 years of age), Junior (ages 9-11), Intermediate (ages 12-15), Senior (ages 16 and over), Virtuoso Category (maximum age 35), and an Adult Category. The Winner of the Virtuoso Category MAY represent the AAA at the Coupe Mondiale the following year, provided all the requirements for repertoire are met.

Time limits for the categories will be as follows (only maximum times listed): Juniorette – 8 minutes, Junior – 10 minutes, Intermediate – 12 minutes, Senior – 15 minutes, Virtuoso – 20 minutes, and Adult – 15 minutes.

The Required Repertoire list for categories will be announced on the website soon, and will be included in the next newsletter (March/April). Interested individuals who would like to receive the list as soon as it is available, please email your request to

ameraccord1938@gmail.com

and the information will be sent to you via return email.

Workshop Presenters

Joey Miskulin • Cory Pesaturo • Sam Reider
Linda Ann Warren • Joan Grammer
and others TBA

CANCELLED!
Luncheon Concert (Thursday)
Meet Sam Reider
Composer, Performer
Leader of "The Human Hands"

Thursday Evening: A Musical Evening on King Street

Luncheon Concert (Friday)
Accordion Pops Orchestra 50th Anniversary Celebration

From the Editor

Welcome to the January-February AAA Newsletter, our first of the new decade!

As we begin 2020, we are excited in anticipation of the amazing array of upcoming accordion activities to be held across the USA.

Be sure to let us know about your events, so that we can keep our readers informed. If we have enough notice, we can publish the information ahead of time to allow you to plan your attendance, but we are also happy to share reports of events that have taken place, so that we can see what is happening in the accordion world.

As always, my sincere thanks to Past AAA President, Linda Reed for her ongoing work in making the final Newsletter Publi-



cation and in particular our Board of Director Rita Barnea for her outstanding work in helping source accordion events across the USA that we often include in our Newsletter publications.

Items for the March-April 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. As always, text should be sent within the e-mail or as a Word attachment if possible. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg 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 2020 Newsletter will be the 15th of February 2020.

Thank you in advance for your continued support with the Newsletter and we wish you all a very safe and happy year ahead.

Sincerely, Kevin

From the President

Hurray 2020 is Here!

Happy New Year and Welcome to our first Newsletter of the 2020 season. Our Board of Directors have been busy at work preparing for a year of exciting musical events. AAA continues to be successful year after year bringing new and innovative ideas to this industry; thanks to the collaboration of such dedicated directors, members and affiliates. A special Thanks goes out to Kevin Friedrich and Linda Soley Reed for producing such Outstanding Newsletters throughout the year.

Along with our newsletters, remember to check out Accordionusa.com for current events and updates. Thanks to



Harley Jones and Rita Davidson Barnea the world has accordion news at their fingertips.

Coming soon! Festival 2020 July 8th – 12th in Alexandria VA. Please make your reservations early. We have a star-studded event including Cory Pesaturo, Joey Miskulin, Sam Reider, The Divas (women of the AAA) and of course the AAA's Lifetime Achievement Awards Dinner Honoring our own LINDA SOLEY REED... Congratulations LINDA! Read more in our newsletter about the 2020 Festival events.

Thank you for your continued support in Making AAA the Premiere Accordion Organization.

Let us continue to strive for Excellence!

Warm Regards,

Dr Joseph A. Ciccone
AAA President

WORLD ACCORDION DAY MAY 2, 2020

Confederation Internationale des
Accordionistes – Kevin Frederick (NY)

Mihoko Goto (Japan)
Chiharu Ebihara

Michael Midleton (TX)

Judy Contino
The Accordion Legend
By Judy Contino (CA)

Helmi Herrington
Guided Museum Tour

Accordion Concertina Studios Band
Tracey Gibbons, Conductor
Playing World Music

DR. WILLARD A. PALMER FESTIVAL - MAY 3, 2020

Mary Tokarski (CT)

Willard Palmer, III (TX)

John Scaffeo (Canada)

Dance Attic: Suzi and Jimi (WI)

Paul Ferguson (WI)

Honoring Lorren Lindevig

Accordion Concertina Studios Band
Tracey Gibbons, Conductor

A WORLD OF ACCORDIONS MUSEUM
HARRINGTON ARTS CENTER
218-393-0245
Tickets: \$25 per event or \$75 per day
Refreshments Included

CANCELLED!

CANCELLED!

Mary Tokarski releases new CD...

'Mary Plays Gary'

AAA Board member and past President Mary Tokarski has just released a new CD featuring works by New Zealand composer and friend, Gary Daverne, titled 'Mary plays Gary'.

The album features 12 tracks with six works being played by Mary with Symphony Orchestra including the Moravian Philharmonic (Czech Republic) and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in both live recordings and playing with pre-recorded backing tracks. The additional tracks are solo works. The album is available as e-tracks with further information being available under 'Mary plays Gary' on www.musicforaccordion.com.

Tracks on the newly released album include:

- *A Musical Party* (with the Moravian Philharmonic - Conducted by Petr Sumnik)
- *Rhapsody for Accordion and Orchestra* (With the Moravian Philharmonic - Conducted by Gary Daverne)
- *Three Songs* (with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra - Conducted by Kenneth Young) 1. *Fireside Fantasies*, 2. *The Awakening*, and 3. *The Journey*
- *Concert Waltz* (with the Moravian Philharmonic - Conducted by Petr Pololanik)
- *Shopping Centre Suite* 1. *Come Shopping*, 2. *In the Bookstore*, 3. *Supermarket*, 4. *Coffee Shop*, 5. *Play Station*
- Bonus track: *Fox and the Hound* by Frank Mucedola

Gary is New Zealand's most prolific and successful composer and arranger of music for the accordion, although he does not actually play the accordion. His musical arrangements and compositions for accordion orchestras and solo accordion are still used extensively around the world. He is highly regarded as an arranger and conductor for Television New Zealand, writing for many of the top New Zealand TV shows. As a record producer, he has to his credit some 40 record albums including one 'platinum' and two 'gold' records.

In 1975 Gary founded and also served as Musical Director/Con-

ductor of the Auckland Symphony Orchestra. After his retirement, he became Conductor Emeritus.

On the international scene, Gary has conducted many major orchestras including London's Royal Philharmonic, the Shanghai Symphony, the Taiwan Symphony, the Moravian Philharmonic (Czech Republic), the National Symphony Orchestra of Malaysia as well as conducting symphony concerts in Jakarta, Indonesia, the United States, Turkey and many other countries, often featuring many of his own compositions.

Accordionist Mary Tokarski, no stranger to the AAA, began her music career at 7 with Michael Fernino of Ansonia, Connecticut and performed and competed at local, state and national events throughout early adulthood amassing over 185 trophies and awards, including two U.S. Championship Titles, a 3rd place in the 1973 Confédération Internationale des Accordeonistes (CIA) Coupe Mondiale, and a 2nd place in that year's Coupe Mondiale Pop Category.

In 1983, Mary founded Tokarski Music Center, where she served as owner and Director of Music Education. Her students have also compiled an impressive list of awards in competition both Nationally and Internationally. Mary plays Gary is available at <http://open.spotify.com/album/1vnLe1GwAeWCTsym9Vhzj6>. For additional information, please contact: mary.tokarski@comcast.net. ■



Lidia Kaminska with Atlantic Classical Orchestra

Lidia Kaminska will perform with the Atlantic Classical Orchestra in a series of concerts in Florida from March 3-6, 2020. Under the direction of Musical Director David Amado, Lidia will be featured on bandoneon performing Aconcagua Concerto by Astor Piazzolla. The concerts take place in Vero Beach (March 3rd, 7:30 PM), Jupiter (March 4th, 7:30 PM) and Stuart (March 6th, 4:00 PM and 8:00:PM).

The concerts, "Masterworks III", are billed as featuring the third of four tries Beethoven made at writing an overture to his only opera, *Fidelio*. The *Leonore Overture No. 3* is the most symphonic of the pack, expansive, dramatic, and moving. We'll follow with Astor Piazzolla's *Concerto Aconcagua*, inspired by the eponymous peak and packed with Argentinian flare, drama, and beauty. It is a rare showpiece for bandoneon and orchestra that virtuoso Lidia Kaminska will



bring to a full boil. After intermission is Schumann's third symphony. Filled with his trademark lyricism, tenderness, heart-on-sleeve sentiment, and oversized passion, it is a masterpiece of German Romanticism.

Accordionist Lidia Kaminska, the winner of Astral Artistic Services' 2007 National Auditions, has performed extensively in both the U.S. and Europe. Ms. Kaminska's chamber music, concerto, and solo performances explore the complex and expressive range of the accordion as a classical instrument, and her repertoire includes a broad range of classical, contemporary, and avant-garde music. She conceived her first album, *Breaking Boundaries*, as part of her mission to change the perception of the accordion from parlor entertainment to a serious classical instrument; Philadelphia Magazine claims "she transforms the accordion into a massive force – more pipe organ than squeezebox – and burns through [classical repertoire] with virtuosic speed and technique."

Ms. Kaminska began playing the accordion at the age of eight. By eleven she was competing in International competitions in Bulgaria and Germany, and just a year later gave solo performances in Holland, Austria, and Germany, as well as in her native Poland. Upon receiving a Master's degree from the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw, she came to the U.S. to study at the University of Missouri in Kansas City (UMKC) studying with Joan C. Sommers, and at 25 she became the first (and only) person in the U.S. to receive a Doctorate in Accordion Performance.

The recipient of a 2009 Career Advancement Award from the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, Ms. Kaminska also

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Rita Barnea receives ATAM Award

The Accordion Teacher's Association of Massachusetts (ATAM) is proud to bestow Honorary Membership upon Rita Davidson Barnea at their 58th Annual New England Festival sponsored by the Accordion Teachers Association of Massachusetts. The event will be held at the Boston Marriott Newton, Mass. from March 27-29, 2020. The New England Music Festival is an annual musical competition and the festival averages more than 3000 entries and 800 contestants from all across New England.

Rita has served as the National Editor of the Accordion USA News (www.accordionusa.com) for the past eleven years. This online monthly publication covering North American continent accordion events, artists, concerts, including video etc. has a tremendous readership of some 95,000 page views per month.

Rita Davidson Barnea is an accomplished accordionist and music teacher. She taught Pre-K to Grade 5 vocal music in the West Orange, NJ public schools for many years where she used the accordion every day in her music classes and to accompany her chorus and programs. For example, she would lead the entire school in a flag song each morning broadcast throughout the school. She did this by bringing her accordion to the main office where the broadcast originated. The accordion plays an important role in the life of a music teacher, especially one that does not have a music room!

Rita is an Honors graduate of the University of Connecticut with a degree in Music Education. She is on the Governing Board of the American Accordionists' Association. Rita has been attending accordion festivals and competitions for years where she judges both piano and accordion categories.

Lidia Kaminska cont'd from p. 3

received First Prize in the 2002 Accordion Teachers Guild, International (ATG) Competition in Orlando, Florida, the Special Prize in New York City's International Tango Music Competition, with the Argentine tango ensemble Tango Lorca and Second Prize at the 2007 Coupe Mondiale International Competition for Ensemble Music. She has researched and performed the works of Astor Piazzolla extensively. Also possessing a special interest in new music, Ms. Kaminska has premiered works by Julia Alford Fowler and Paul Rudy and has appeared with the contemporary music ensembles New Ear and Musica Nova. She has also performed with both the Owen/Cox Dance Group and at the world premiere of BalletX; she went on to collaborate with Mathew Neenan of BalletX, and with dancer/choreographer Jorge Laico, for Pennsylvania Dance Theatre.

Ms. Kaminska recently performed in a concert entitled "From My Latin Soul," with legendary tenor Plácido Domingo in Washington, D.C.'s Constitution Hall. Symphony in C featured her in a sold-out performance as soloist in Piazzolla's Aconcagua concerto for bandoneón, and she recently made a return appearance at the Symphony. She has also been a featured soloist with the Delaware Symphony Orchestra, the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music, the Kielce Philharmonic Orchestra of Poland, the Strings of Lodz, the Concord Chamber Orchestra, the North Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, and the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra. She has also been presented at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Philadelphia Magazine featured her in its 2006 "Best of Philly" issue, and her interview with Marty Moss-Coane was recently broadcast on WHYY and NPR.

Lidia made her bandoneon debut in the Spring of 2007 and has been active performing on it ever since. For more information on the March performances, please visit www.atlanticclassicalorchestra.com. ■



Rita Barnea has released an album titled "The Music of Eugene Ettore Album" which includes his most well known works published by MusicForAccordion.com where it is a free download to promote people playing the compositions of Eugene Ettore.

Rita studied accordion with Eugene Ettore, a former AAA President and noted accordion composer and Rita also presents workshops and concerts on the "Life and Music of Eugene Ettore" and "The Use of the Accordion in the Teaching of Music in School". For more information, please contact Rita: Ritabell@aol.com. ■

Joan C. Sommers to receive AAMS Award

The American Accordion Musicological Society (AAMS) is proud to honor Joan C. Sommers at their Honoree Banquet and Concert. Their 30th Anniversary Festival will be held on March 6 and 7, 2020 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2349 W NJ Route 70, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002.

The Banquet MC will be Manny Bobenreith.

The event will feature two Festival Orchestras including:

- Advanced Festival Orchestra 1: directed by Joan C. Sommers
- Intermediate Festival Orchestra 2: directed by Dee Langley

Workshops will be presented by Al Terzo, Joe Natoli and Joan C. Sommers.

Registration is now being accepted. All full registrations received prior to February 1, 2020 will receive a \$10 credit towards one Honoree Banquet ticket on their registration fee.

Attend exciting workshops presented by Joan Sommers, Joe Natoli, and Al Terzo. There will be a question and answer panel. Please submit questions ahead of time for discussion by workshop presenters and festival orchestra directors.

For further information please contact Joanna Darrow at (856) 854-6628 or email: acmeraccordion@gmail.com. ■



Hadestown featuring Accordion Highlights

Welcome to Hadestown, where a song can change your fate. This acclaimed new musical by celebrated singer-songwriter Anaïs Mitchell and innovative director Rachel Chavkin (Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812) is a love story for today...and always.

Hadestown intertwines two mythic tales - that of young dreamers Orpheus and Eurydice and that of King Hades and his wife Persephone - as it invites you on a hell-raising journey to the underworld and back. Mitchell's beguiling melodies and Chavkin's poetic imagination pit industry against nature, doubt against faith and fear against love. Performed by a vibrant ensemble of actors, dancers and singers, Hadestown is a haunting and hopeful theatrical experience that grabs you and never lets go.

AAA Board of Director and Editor of the United States National Accordion News, Rita Barnea, attended "Hadestown" on December 8, 2019 on Broadway. She reports *"Not only is it an exciting show, both visually and musically, but I was happy and greatly surprised to see two accordions onstage played continuously throughout the show. Liam Robinson is the conductor, pianist, vocal arranger and accordionist, onstage with the orchestra for the entire production."* Robinson has been associated with several Tony Award winning productions including "War Horse" which won five Tonys in 2011, including Best Play. Robinson played Song Man in the original Broadway cast. Hadestown, nominated for 14 Awards, won eight Tonys, including Best Musical and Best Original Score. Robinson attended the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire before studying at the Manhattan School of Music.

Rita goes on to say *"I watched Liam effortlessly switching from piano to accordion many times. The accordion was featured in several of the songs. One of the actresses sang, played and danced with the accordion."*

Dr. William Schimmel shares, *"The musical director for Hadestown, Liam Robinson, was my student in accordion, orchestration and theory"* while Dr. Leslie Strong commented, *"The accordion added spirit and joviality to a magnificent performance of the Greek tragedy, "Orpheus" in "Hadestown." The accordion added another meaningful dimension."*

"Hadestown" is playing now at the Walter Kerr Theatre in New York City. ■



World Accordion Day -

What are you Doing?

What are you doing for World Accordion Day to promote the accordion in your country? World Accordion day is on May 6th, the anniversary of the day the accordion was patented in 1829.

On the 6th of May 1829, almost 190 years ago to this day, a patent was filed for the 'accordion'. Cyrill Demian (born in 1772 and passed away in 1849), an organ and piano maker of Armenian origin, accompanied by his two sons

Karl and Guido, filed the patent in Vienna, Austria.

Consign: No. 1433 listed a new type of instrument consisting of a small box with "feathers of metal plates and bellows fixed to" making it easy to carry and play. The new instrument was seven to nine inches long, three-and-a-half wide, and two inches high. The bellows were fixed above the box and five keys fixed below.

The makers claimed it was possible to perform Marches, Arias, Melodies, even by an amateur of music, with little practice, and to play the loveliest and most pleasant chords of three, four and five voices with little practice. The patent was approved a short time later on May 23, 1829.

What followed was a path of innovation, development, experimentation and expansion, each, a piece in the jigsaw puzzle of our instrument's history. Throughout this evolution, we have seen uncountable variations in shape, size and keyboard configuration of the accordion. Equally diverse is the genres of music the accordion is used to perform from classical to folk, from jazz to pop and everything in between.

World Accordion Day was started in 2009 by the CIA and has been very successful, generating a lot of positive publicity for the accordion. A key part of this event is the World Accordion Day website which showcases the diversity of the accordion around the globe.

Every association, group, orchestra, performer and teacher, is invited to actively support this event by encouraging national and local accordion activities to happen in their country on this day or the weekend either side of Accordion Day if that should be more convenient.

Everyone can register their World Accordion Day activity on the website and send a report of their event after, for that website.

No event is too big or too small. ALL accordion events celebrating World Accordion Day are welcome. This is a CIA promotion for the accordion in which every accordion enthusiast can participate and help bring our accordion world together as well as strongly promote our instrument. For more information, please visit the 'events' section of www.accordions.com/cia ■



Accordion Pops Orchestra Celebrates 50th Anniversary

The Accordion Pops Orchestra (see photo below) is celebrating their 50th Concert Season. They are now accepting new members. Consider joining! The group consists entirely of accordions plus percussion instruments. In addition, the orchestra often accompanies guest soloists including pianists and vocal artists. Al Terzo, APO Conductor from 2011 to the Present, is a teacher, arranger, and conductor who has been with the orchestra since its inception in 1970. He is a member of the Music Teachers National Association, New Jersey Music Teachers Association, and National Association of Music Educators. Mr. Terzo serves on the governing board of the American Accordionists' Association and is a founding member of the Mid Atlantic Music Teachers Guild. He is an accomplished accordionist who has performed at the Garden State Arts Center and Newark's Symphony Hall. Currently Mr. Terzo teaches accordion and piano in New Jersey.

For further information regarding joining the Orchestra and their upcoming performances and activities, please contact: Al-terzo@hotmail.com (see photo below) ■

Dr. William Schimmel Upcoming Performances

Metropolitan Opera through January 22 at the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center.

Dr. Schimmel premiered his new work "Variations on a Waltz by Pee Wee King" on January 12, 2020, followed by a performance with the North South Consonance Orchestra under the leadership of its founder and director, Max Lifchitz.

Dr. Schimmel is a leading accordionist, composer and academic, based in New York, where he organizes the annual 'Master Class and Concert Series (The Seminars)' sponsored by the American Accordionists' Association. He received a Merit Award from the CIA for his contributions spanning fifty years plus the "Accordionist of the Year" Award in 1988. He has performed with many major symphony orchestras in the US, many chamber groups, as well as with rock, jazz and avant-garde groups.

As a Juilliard trained musician, he is frequently asked to play with the Philharmonic and other orchestras around the country. He also performs in the pit orchestras on Broadway, his most recent performance being the accordionist for the award winning production of "An American in Paris." Over the years Bill's music has been included in television shows and films. His best

Amy Jo Sawyer ISMTA Teacher of the Year

State Music Teachers Association was pleased to award Amy Jo Sawyer with the Music Teacher of the Year Award.

Amy Jo Sawyer joined MTNA in 1978 and became a Nationally Certified Teacher member in 1989. Amy Jo received an MA in Jazz Performance and BA in Piano Performance and Composition, is past President, Certification Chair, AIM Chair for the ISMTA Gateway Arch East Chapter, for which she currently serves as Vice President/Program Coordinator. She was Chapter "Member of the Year" 2000, 2014 and 2019, received the ISMTA Composer Commissioning Award in 2014 and is currently the ISMTA Composer Commissioning Program Chair. Her piano students have participated in the AIM program finishing level twelve with high honors while other students have won competitions in Ragtime competitions in St. Louis. One composition student won 2nd place and tied for 3rd place in consecutive years in the Hal Leonard Composer competition. Ten of her original piano compositions are approved for the AIM Program.

She began piano at age five and accordion by age ten. She represented the USA at the Coupe Mondiale (World Accordion Championship) in Biel, Switzerland and is a Nationally Certified Piano Instructor with the Music Teacher's National Association. She earned BA Degrees in Composition and Keyboard Performance, and an MA in Jazz Keyboard Performance. She has composed and

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known appearance is in the tango scene of "Scent of a Woman" starring Al Pacino.

cont'd. on next page Bill Schimmel learned accordion as a child and attended Juilliard School of Music where he received his doctorate in composition. While he was still a student at the school, his career was launched after he recorded songs of avant gard composer, Luiano Berio. An authority on Kurt Weill, Dr. Schimmel has

recorded all of Weill's music with accordion. Beginning in 1981, Schimmel's Tango Project has released a string of acclaimed recordings on the Nonesuch and Newport Classic labels. The first Tango Project recording went to No. 1 on Billboard's classical charts and was named Record of the Year by Stereo Review magazine. Dr. Schimmel has served and continues to serve as Artist in Residence of The American Accordionist's Association (AAA) where he also serves as Distinguished Lecturer in Residence and member of the Governing Board. For further information e-mail: accordionbill@gmail.com ■



Accordion Pops Orchestra

The Squeezebox Squad

The Squeezebox Squad at P.S. 203Q in Bayside, Queens (New York) is pleased to report they had a very busy December! They performed all throughout their neighborhood in New York City. On December 8, 2019 the eight and nine year olds delighted the crowds at the Bayside Hills Civic Association's Holiday Lighting event. They performed for neighbors, elected officials, and even Santa was there!

On December 17, 2019, the young accordionists played to an audience of around 400 at the P.S. 203 Winter Concert. Their set list included, "The Dreidel Song", "Silver Bells" and "Jingle Bells". "I am so proud of each of these students", commented the group's director, Linda Holcomb. "The majority of them started learning how to play the accordion in October, and now, just two months later they are playing beautifully!" The students are excited to be learning the accordion alongside their assistant principal, Ai-Huei Chang-Lau. "It's a great experience for our children, as well as for our assistant principal, to have two generations learning something new, side by side," comments Linda Holcomb.

On December 19th, the accordion club took their show on the road and performed for the Clearview Senior Center in Bayside. Wearing their Santa hats, they entertained the senior adults with their holiday classics. Papa Joe De Clemente, the group's mentor, was there to play as well. The students and their director appreci-

Amy Jo Sawyer cont'd from p. 6

arranged for Stage Band, Vocals, Choir, Piano; plus Accordion solos, duets, and ensembles.

Along with being 2nd VP for the Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International, Amy Jo is accordionist with the St. Louis Symphony and performed 'Italian Love Songs' when Luciano Pavarotti sang. Her Accordion Orchestra works, solos and duets have been performed Internationally. The Salt Creek Chapter (Chicago) commissioned her to write piano music for 'Eight Hands'

Dr. Schimmel, cont'd from p. 6

Bill Schimmel learned accordion as a child and attended Juilliard School of Music where he received his doctorate in composition. While he was still a student at the school, his career was launched after he recorded songs of avant gard composer, Luiano Berio. An authority on Kurt Weill, Dr. Schimmel has recorded all of Weill's music with accordion. Beginning in 1981, Schimmel's Tango Project has released a string of acclaimed recordings on the Nonesuch and Newport Classic labels. The first Tango Project recording went to No. 1 on Billboard's classical charts and was named Record of the Year by Stereo Review magazine.

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ate the time, effort and the love that Papa Joe puts into the Squeezebox Squad.

Holcomb said that it's because of Papa Joe that they have 4 additional accordions this year. "Joe is always talking about our students to fellow accordionists, and getting people to donate accordions so we can give more children the opportunity to learn the accordion. He's been a real blessing to our school!"

The members of the Squeezebox Squad are Laila Aziz, Ai-Huei Chang-Lau, Daniel Chen, Kevin Chen, Luke Chen, Kathleen Cheng, Kyle Cheung, Lily Korniewicz, Lexie Wu, Cynthia Ye, Nathan Zhang, Kathy Zhang, Amber Zhou, and Ziran Zhu. ■

Houston Accordion Orchestra Retreat 2021

A preliminary announcement is being made announcing the Houston Accordion Orchestra Retreat being held from January 14-16, 2021 at the Kemah Boardwalk Inn, Kemah, Texas. The event includes three full days of orchestra rehearsals, and open mic and jam sessions every night and a final public concert at the Theater on January 16th.



Featuring Musical Director Stas Venglevski and guest artist Joan C. Sommers, the retreat is designed for the serious accordion ensemble accordionist. It is limited in number to a maximum of 35 accordionists and will be booked on a first come, first served basis. For more information, please contact Megumi (Meg) Hada, meghada33@gmail.com. ■



Carozza Scholarship Dinner • Sunday, September 13, 2020
Famee Furlane of NA Club • 2010 127th Street • College Point, NY 11356

Long Island Accordion Alliance to feature Paolo Belanich

La Villini Restaurant of East Northport, NY will sponsor the February 5th meeting of the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) which will feature Paolo Belanich. Paul (Paolo) Belanich started to play accordion at age 5. Born on St. Peter's Island (Ilovik) the northern part of the Croatian Adriatic Sea, where the accordion is the center of entertainment. He started playing his father's diatonic button accordion as his father did and both of his uncles. Paul now performs with his brother as a 2 piece band in the Tri State area. He entertains in Slovenian & Austrian polka styles with a blend of valtaro musette flavor which he grew up with. Performing and playing mostly by ear he has recently recorded some of his music which consists of different rhythms other than polka and waltzes as well, he also sings in English, Croatian and Italian. Paul always says, "What fires me up the most and gives my heart the happiest feeling, is the polka music itself". Playing accordion since the early 60's, my love for the accordion is the same today as it was back then. I just hope that one day the American public realizes how beautiful the accordion is as a musical instrument.

Their March 4th meeting will feature the amazing duo of Don Gerundo and Steve Bruno.

The Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) sponsored
La Villini Restaurant
presents an evening of accordion music and featured guest artist
**Paolo Belanich on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at
6:00 P.M.**



Come and join us at:
La Villini Restaurant, 288 Larkfield Road, East Northport, NY 11751
(631) 261-6344
www.la-villini.com/index.html
Reservations are recommended
Our Wednesday, March 4, 2020 featured artists will be the
Don Gerundo Duo



Don Gerundo is an active accordionist and pianist performing in the New York metropolitan area. He is a versatile keyboardist who plays various styles ranging from popular standards from the American Songbook, jazz and rock 'n roll. He works with the Bensen-Scott Big Band, an 18 piece jazz band and has also worked with a rockabilly small group as well as society combos and "top 40 groups." He has performed and accompanied Lenny Welch (hit record "Since I Fell For You"), Joe Piscopo and has performed at Swing 46 in New York City, White Plains Theatre for the Arts, Coney Island Park and other large venues.

Don started playing the accordion at age 10. During his later

teens he studied with Tony Mecca (a native from Waterbury CT.) Tony introduced him to popular and jazz music and worked with him on harmony, theory and improvisation. During this time he started to perform club dates with some of the local leaders in the New York metropolitan area as well as working at resorts in the New York Catskill area. This "on the job" training helped hone his jazz skills as well as build his repertoire. He continued to perform during his college years attending Ithaca College where he joined the national music fraternity Phi Mu Alpha as the first accordionist to be offered an invitation in that chapter. For the last several years Don has focused on the "free bass accordion" and exploring its use in the pop and jazz idioms by utilizing its flexibility in chord voicings, bass lines and general accompaniment.

Don is also an experienced user of Finale (music notation software) and has used it almost from its inception (1992). He uses it to create arrangements, generate materials for students, create transcriptions as well as composition. Many colleagues use Don as a resource to seek guidance using Finale as well as troubleshooting technical issues.

Spencer Bruno who has been a member of Local 802 since 1973, has paid his dues in more ways than one. He is the executive director and owner of the Lester Lanin Orchestra, the top society band. Spencer worked with Lester Lanin himself since 1990 and had the distinct honor of taking over the business after Lanin's passing in 2004. Spencer's dream to be a musician was realized early on. He worked with Richard Tucker, Roberta Peters, Robert Merrill, Ruggiero Ricci, Loren Hollander, Shirley Jones, Connie Francis and Dionne Warwick. Early on, he was advised to pursue a music education degree to assure financial security. He did, in fact, find work as a professional educator, but was laid off, "a blessing in disguise," he says, because it forced him to devote full time efforts to music performance. Later on he worked with Buddy Greco, Jerry Orbach, Lou Rawls, Ray Charles, Chita Rivera, Rosemary Clooney, Vic Damone, Johnny Mathis, Tony Bennett, Natalie Cole and Paul Anka. Brushing elbows with top musicians and entertainers continues to invigorate him as it has with so many musicians who remain forever young.

Presently, he continues to bring quality contemporary and classic pop music to the public. He is grateful to have the support of the extremely talented Local 802 musicians he engages, who work hard to maintain a high standard. Local 802 recording rep Bob Pawlo recently caught up with Spencer Bruno and got some interesting insight into Spencer's life in music.

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ATG 80th Anniversary in Los Angeles

The Accordionists & Teachers Guild International (ATG) will celebrate their 80th Anniversary from August 5-9, 2020 at the Doubletree Hotel in Los Angeles, CA.

The event will feature concerts, competitions, workshops, exhibits, International guests, the CIA World Accordion Orchestra XII, the 80th Anniversary ATG Gala Banquet and much more.

Guest artists will include multi World Champion Alexander Poeluev (Russia), Cory Pesaturo (USA), Stas Venglevski (Moldova/USA), the Viennese Accordion Chamber Ensemble (Austria), the Polyphonia Orchestra (Réunion Island), the UMKC Chamber Accordion Ensemble (USA), the Bavairan Youth Orchestra (Germany) the Southern Cross Accordion Orchestra (Australia/New Zealand), Mirco Patarini (Italy) and more. Concerts will feature accordion orchestras and ensembles, solo performances and works with Symphony Orchestra, including the Concerti of ATG founder and President Emeritus, the late Anthony Gallarini.

Concerts and activities will be held at the Hotel headquarters as well as at renowned Aratani Theatre, the Herbert Zipper Concert Hall and other venues throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. The celebration will include numerous social events including the 80th ATG Anniversary Banquet.

The ATG and AAA are joint members of the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA), a member of the International Music Council (IMC), an Official NGO partner of UNESCO. The American Accordionists' Association (AAA) recently celebrated their 80th Anniversary in Alexandria, VA. For information, please visit www.atgaccordions.com. ■

Accordionists & Teachers Guild International (ATG)

member Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA)

International Music Council (IMC), an NGO official partner of UNESCO



Starring ...



Alexander Poeluev
Russia

Cory Pesaturo
USA

Stas Venglevski
USA

Viennese Accordion
Chamber Ensemble, Austria

Polyphonia Orchestra
Réunion Island



DOUBLETREE HOTEL
120 South Los Angeles Street,
Los Angeles, CA

Single/Double \$189 plus tax
Triple \$209 plus tax
Quadruple \$229 plus tax

5-9 August, 2020

Featuring: Concerts,
Competitions, Workshops,
Exhibits, International Guests,
World Accordion Orchestra XII
80th Anniversary Banquet,
and much more!

www.atgaccordions.com

CANCELLED!

LOS ANGELES
California

Not Just Oompah - June 26-28 - Austin, Texas

Get your summer plans ready for more accordion fun!

It is time to register for the exciting 2020 Not Just Oom-Pah! Accordion Workshop and Concert, June 26 - 28, 2020 in Austin, Texas. This third-year project is made possible by a grant from the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department, with support from Texas Folklife, Austin Central Market, and the San Antonio Accordion Association.

The workshop presenters/concert performers for 2020 NJO will be the talented Alicia Baker and Grammy Award Nominee, Kevin Solecki. The NJO Concert is FREE and open to the public, held on Friday June 26, 6:30-9:00 pm at Central Market North, 4001 N. Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78756. The Central Market concert location is the perfect family friendly location to bring friends, purchase a nice dinner, a glass of wine, and listen to fabulous music presented by Alicia Baker (the Ooh-la-la !) and Kevin Solecki (the Oom-Pah-Pah !)

ACCORDION CONCERT & WORKSHOP

Featuring

Alicia Baker

& Kevin Solecki

GRAMMY
NOMINATED!



French Musette



Polka

cont'd. on next page

Not Just Oompah, cont'd from p. 10

The Workshop will be held Saturday – Sunday, June 27 - 28 from 8:30 am - 5:30 pm at the spacious Lamar Senior Activity Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Ave., Austin, TX 78705. A FREE Polka Dance Session will be held on Sunday, June 28, so bring your family and friends for a fun afternoon learning polka, with free dance lessons taught by Gaby Thompson from the San Antonio Accordion Association.

Grant administrators, Shirley Johnson and Laura Jean Niland announced that NJO plans to break the rules by featuring “Oompah” (Kevin Solecki) and “non-Oompah” (Alicia Baker with French Café music and more). Included in the workshop is time for a jam session with participants, and also play & sing along with Solecki at the polka dance session on Sunday afternoon. In addition, NJO is offering one Youth Scholarship to a deserving accordionist age 18 or younger. Application for the Youth Scholarship is available online at our website www.NotJustOompah.org You are encouraged

to apply today! *cont'd. on next pa*

Registration/Payment is now open at the website www.NotJustOompah.org where you can find detailed information about each workshop, download, and register for the 2020 NJO event, download the application for Youth Scholarship, and also find our recommended Hotel Information. Registration fees for accordionist and non-accordionists are posted online at the website.

Give yourself the best summer break ever and register TODAY for the Not Just Oom-Pah! Workshop & Concert for accordionists/non-accordionists.

NJO Registration Forms & Payment DEADLINE June 15, 2020.

Hotel Registration DEADLINE May 28, 2020 for reduced rate.

Youth Scholarship Application DEADLINE April 5, 2020. ■

Welcome to Chicagoland Accordion Academy

The recently established accordion program in Chicago is off to a great start with new enrollments furthering the excitement. Founder Mary Ann Covone reports that the interest is high and the students are motivated and committed to their newly established accordion orchestra.

In the 1940-60s, the accordion was a very popular instrument in Chicago. There were schools in every section of the city with hundreds of students at each school taking lessons and participating in “accordion band.” When the students were very young and novices at the accordion, they played in the “beginner band.” As their skills developed, they would progress moving up to the intermediate band and ultimately to the senior level band! These bands traveled to competitions around the country sponsored by the American Accordionists' Association (AAA) and the Accordionists and Teachers Guild (ATG). The accordion was a part of every day life and had its own “social life” as accordionists from all over the country (and the world) shared this common interest and came to know each other!

Mary Ann recounts that she grew up in that life (albeit a little later in time), and the good times, good teachers and good friends



have impacted and influenced her life in ways I could never have imagined. I am grateful for those experiences and am planning to recreate them for all through the Chicagoland Accordion Academy (CAA).

Anyone that has ever played the accordion, and it still holds a special place in your heart, or those wishing to learn for the first time, are invited to join the activities! Together they are renewing the enthusiasm and recapturing the fun of playing the accordion!

The Chicagoland Accordion Academy classes are geared toward adults who want to learn to play for their own enjoyment. Students learn to read music and to listen to music and learn how to adapt it to the accordion. Our students have expressed a variety of reasons why they want to play the accordion such as:

- They like the sound of the instrument
- They have an older relative who played
- They inherited an instrument
- They want to play with an ethnic group
- They want to play music of their heritage
- They played as a child and want to resume learning
- They played the piano but want to learn accordion because it is portable
- They know that playing the accordion provides an outlet from the stress of everyday life.

Whatever your reason is for wanting to play the accordion, the Academy will work with you and help you achieve your goal! ■



Chicagoland Accordion Orchestra

Dick Contino Estate Comes to AWAM

AWAM proudly announces the impending arrival of Dick Contino's estate as a major landmark event for our museum. This 1940s idol and national heartthrob prompted unparalleled accordion enthusiasm that inspired thousands of aspirants and greatly promoted the industry in general.

Contino won the hearts of American audiences after winning Horace Heidt's talent contest with his version of "Lady of Spain." Thereafter featured on major television shows, his public performances drew extraordinary audience numbers and unprecedented income. His name became, and remains, one of the most prominent in American accordion history.

His brilliant virtuosity and charismatic stage presence regularly thrilled Las Vegas audiences even into his advanced years. Contino died in 2017 at age 87.

Mrs. Judy Contino, in current phone calls, declared her intention to donate a significant portion of her husband's estate in order to draw ongoing public attention to the legacy of his contributions to American culture. In addition, for our 2020 World Accordion Day festival she committed to presenting a 45-min. talk to include unpublished excerpts of Dick's life, some with humorous anecdotes that portray the real person who was more than a world celebrity.

The announced donations include recordings, photos, music in published and manuscript form, and sundry items of varied import. One of these will be a life-size mannequin accompanied by some performance clothes worn in his Las Vegas shows. This figure will be displayed in our Special Exhibits Area as a new focal attraction of the Concert Hall.

It is particularly interesting to note that during our 2019 festival, Bill Palmer, III, incidentally related the story of how Contino urged his father to construct what became the Palmer-Hughes Accordion Method. He will retell the anecdote as a tie connecting World Accordion Day (May 2) and our Eighth Annual Dr. Willard Palmer Festival (May 3). Additional connections between the two upcoming events will involve musical titles that Contino made household favorites, played by the ACM Band and soloists including Dr. Michael Middleton.

Much has been written about Dick as an American idol: "He was promoted as the 'Rudolph Valentino' of the accordion... With muscled arms built up with barbells and Charles Atlas's dynamic tension exercises, Mr. Contino played the accordion like a rock star. His fingers flew over the keys. Elvis-like, he wiggled, shook and swaggered. He played polkas, jazz, romantic songs, show tunes and folk music. And, of course, Lady of Spain." ■



Our US Champions...Where are they now?

Many of our AAA U.S. Champions may not be on the concert stage as performers but several have found their niche in other areas of music. One such past US Champion is Dan Mastroianni, US Champion 1981. I was in touch with Dan a few years ago when he contacted me to tell me that he was writing compositions for the accordion and sent me some samples of his creative genius. I immediately forwarded them to Dr. Robert Young McMahan, an AAA board member who is a staunch advocate of new music and an instructor at Teachers College of New Jersey and head of the Music Department. Bob was so impressed with his music he had me get in touch with him right away.

Dan was a student of the late Frank Porto in Bridgeport, Connecticut and went on to study at the University of Bridgeport with Dr. David Barnett and Prof. Linten. The AAA has recently added a composition category to their events, the Elsie M. Bennett Composers Commissioning Competition. I suggested to Dan that he enter and he finally did last year, winning the 1st place award and \$500 cash for his composition *Awkward Moments...a movement from his 5th Accordion Sonata.*

Dan began writing for Accordion in 1975 - his "Freeway Episode" is written for an Accordion Sextet. "I write for all instrumentations, including 7 symphonies, 5 masses, 3 string quartets, 5 accordion sonatas, and various solo accordion works, 1 Accordion Concerto, several Orchestral Tone Poems, 18 Piano Trios, 3 Chamber pieces that include Accordion, etc."

Dan competed in the 1980 Coupe Mondiale in Auckland, New Zealand and received a bronze medal. Selections he performed include Suite Aotea (Mews), Impending Disaster (Faiella), Sonata #2 (Mastroianni), Prelude & Fugue in A Minor (Bach), Folklore of the Soviet Union (Nayounkin) and Sonata #3 (Zolatariew).

In 1982, Dan received a gold medal at the competition in Hamburg, Germany. His program included Nagayev's Sonata #1, Bach - Fantasia & Fugue in G Minor, Moskowski's Rhapsodie Espanole, Mastroianni Sonata #3 and Scarlatti Sonata #27.

Dan started playing accordion in 1972 but continues to perform, "but only on piano these days." ■



Coast to Coast

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



BRISTOL, CT

The Connecticut Accordion Association presented their annual CAA Holiday Concert "Seasonal Melodies" on Saturday, December 7, 2019. The concert featured traditional holiday favorites, both contemporary and classical, performed by the CAA Orchestra under the direction of Peter Peluso.

The Connecticut Accordion Association began in 2004, the brainchild of Marilyn O'Neil and her accordion teacher, Mary Tokarski. The CAA is dedicated to the promotion of the accordion through all music genres and all variations of accordion instruments! CAA welcomes musicians who play all types of accordions....piano accordion, diatonic, chromatic button and more. They invite accordionists at all levels, and people who may not play the accordion, but love to listen.

For further information please contact: CAA@ctaccordion.com or phone (203) 272-1202.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

On January 19th, 2020, the San Francisco Accordion Club featured Bonnie Birch performing a versatile repertoire of American, European Continental (French, Italian, etc), and classical music.: Bonnie began accordion lessons at the age of 7 and studied with Thorild Swanson from Stancatto School of Accordion up to the age of 19. Thor was a classically trained musician with a desire for perfection and with his guidance, Bonnie developed excellent technique, musicianship and the appreciation of practice and patience. She was a consistent winner at the Washington Accordion Teachers competitions culminating in a trip to New York for an International competition and a performance in Carnegie Hall.

PORT CHARLOTTE, FL

The second gathering of the Port Charlotte Accordion Club had a nice turnout of performers including our guest artists, Joan Grauman and Bill Morse, Joe Cerrito, Ray Kawalski (right), Richard Williams, the lovely vocalist, Nicola and Port Charlotte's own, Chris



Brettschneider. Their February meeting featured Walt Kasprzyk plus our regulars and open mic for anyone who wants to perform.



We meet at the American Legion Post 110 on Harbor Blvd. on the 1st Sunday of the month. Our March gath-

ering will feature EZ Listening Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon with Joe Cerrito, accordion and Dick Smolens, vocals.

ATLANTA, GA

The Atlanta Club meets on the second Sunday of the month at Taqueria Tsunami in Sandy Springs, GA. Contact Biff Asta - henria@bellsouth.net

BROOKLYNN, NEW YORK

BAC members were invited to hear Hanzhi Wang with the Omer Quartet at the Morgan Library & Museum recently. Tickets for BAC members were offered at a 50% discount.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Accordionist Dominic Karcic and his "Continental Sound" musicians were once again part of the very elegant and prestigious Columbus Citizens Foundation Christmas Celebration on Saturday evening, December 21, 2019. The event was held at the Foundation's historic town house on East 69th Street in New York City.

This Foundation contributes well over a million dollars in educational scholarships every year to benefit Italian-American families. These educational scholarships cover funds toward elementary, high school, college and even some members sponsor students through graduate school and medical school. The Foundation is also the sponsors of the annual Columbus Day Parade in New York City and maintains the Christopher Columbus Statue on Columbus Circle in New York City.

Dominic and his musicians have been part of this event and other events / festivities at the Foundation for well over thirty years. This year's event was attended by one-hundred and fifty members and their guests. Music performed included Christmas songs, a wide variety of Italian repertoire, show tunes as well as operatic arias by Giacomo Puccini.

CHAPPAQUA, NY

The Hudson Valley Accordion Ensemble will be performing at the well-known Kittel House in Chappaqua, NY on Sunday, February 23 from 4:00-8:00 pm. Be sure to call the Kittle House to make your reservations - 914-666-8044. Don't miss this "It's A Wonderful World" Evening!

DALLAS, TX

The doors for the 33rd National Accordion Association (NAA) Convention will open again on Wednesday evening March 18th with registration, Orchestra rehearsals and an opportunity to meet and mingle. The official start will be Thursday morning and the conventioners will see and experience several changes, from the layout of the

rooms, more orchestras, but most importantly new presenters and sessions. No excuses not to come. Here are some changes in detail:

Conventioners can choose between four Orchestras, there should be something for everybody to attend, Matthias Matzke (Germany) will conduct the Symphonic Orchestra, Dick Albrecht (OK) the Fun Band, Shelia Lee (TX) the Dance Band and for the first time this year will have a Digital Orchestra with Sam Falcetti (MA).

Here is a list of presenters who are either new this year or haven't been at the convention for some time: Bob Donovan (TN), Gary Blair (Scotland), Ginny Mac (TX), MidiRig (Scotland), Richard Noel (CA), Tris Gour (IN), Tutto-a-Dio (Lithuania / Switzerland). Returning presenters from last year are: Bill Palmer (TX), Cory Pesaturo (RI), Debra Peters (TX), Elena Fainshtein (TX), Eli Davidson (TX), Gail Campanella (CA), Gordon Kohl (CA), Matthias Matzke (Germany), Mike Middleton (CA), and Sharon Seaton (CA).

For more information, please visit www.accordions.com/naa

SEATTLE, WA

The Seattle Accordion Socials meet on the 2nd Monday of each month, (except July and August), from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. The socials are located at the Senior Center of West Seattle, 4217 SW Oregon St, Seattle, WA 98116. Free parking is available for three hours at the Diamond Parking lot across the alley, enter on 42nd between Oregon and Alaska Streets.

Seattle Accordion Socials are open to the public, accordion players of all levels, their friends, families and all who enjoy accordion music. \$5 admission at the door. If you would like to play your accordion at future socials, please contact: John Giuliani at 425-255-2121.

TERRY BEAL

Susan Nunes, a member from California is trying to locate her childhood friend, Terry Beal, who often spent summer vacations near Susan in Hilo, Hawaii. Susan states that Terry was a true prodigy performing regularly and had a striking appearance with her platinum blonde hair. Terry performed regularly since she was a youngster. If you know anything about Terry, please contact the AAA Office at ameraccord1938@gmail.com. All information is confidential.

LARRY LaVAUX

A family member of Larry LaVaux is trying to locate recordings or any details of Larry's performances. Larry was an instructor and performer in the Westchester area in the 40s and 50s. Any information can be sent to ameraccord1938@gmail.com and we will forward to the family.