



# AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION Newsletter

The official membership publication of the American Accordionists' Association

December 2021 Review

## From the Editor

### Welcome to the December Year End Review and Holiday edition of the AAA Newsletter!

Thank you all for your tremendous support with the relaunching of the AAA Newsletter. We are delighted to be able to share this sampling of accordion activities with our readers. Your ongoing support of the Newsletter is much appreciated and we invite you to keep us posted by sharing your accordion news with your fellow members.

My sincere thanks to our new publisher, AAA Board member Frank Busso, Jr. I would like to also thank our Board members Rita Barnea and Joan Grauman for their outstanding work in helping source accordion events and news items to include in our Newsletter publications.

News items for January/February 2022 can be sent to me at [ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ameraccordnewsletter@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 email or as a Microsoft Word attachment if possible. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg file (or similar) 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. Please send your items as soon as possible, in order to ensure it is included in the upcoming 2022 January-February edition.

As we close out 2021 and welcome in 2022, we trust you have all enjoyed a very safe and happy Holiday Season and best wishes for a wonderful year ahead.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Friedrich, AAA Newsletter Editor - [ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com)



***Mark your calendars!***

***AAA Festival - July 13-17, 2022***

***Marriott Philadelphia West***

***111 Crawford Avenue***

***Conshohocken, PA 19428***

***(610) 941-5600***

*Guest Artists   Concerts   Workshops   Competitions   Orchestras*

*Exhibits   Lifetime Achievement Award   ...and More!*

***Special "accordion festival" room rate:***

***\$135 per night, includes parking***

## 74th Coupe Mondiale in Germany

Olzhas Nurfanov of Kazakhstan became the 74th winner of the Coupe Mondiale. After an intense three rounds of competition and a very narrow margin in marks, Olzhas, with 23.77 points, just edged ahead of Michele Bianco (Italy) on 23.70 points, to take this year's world title.

His repertoire in the three rounds of competitions included: Round I: D. Scarlatti: Sonata in C minor, Viatcheslav Semionov: Prophetic Dream, and Franz Liszt, arr. Yuri Shishkin: Etude G-Moll. For Round II, requiring an original work for the accordion, he performed Zolotaryov's magnificent Sonata No. 3. To conclude his program in Round III, an own choice program, he presented: J. S. Bach: Prelude and Fugue in A minor, Anatoli Kussyakov: Images Of The Passing Time, Movements. 1,2,12, M. Glinka, arr. Balakirev: The Lark, and Viatcheslav Semionov's Sonata No. 1.

The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes's (CIA) 74th Coupe Mondiale and 146th CIA International General Assembly of Delegates Congress was held in Munich, Germany hosted by their CIA member, the Deutscher Harmonika-Verband e.V. (DHV). The festival was held from 13-17 October 2021 and also celebrated the milestone 90th Anniversary of the DHV, a founding member of the CIA.

Featuring an array of concerts and competitions, the seven categories of International competition were held with the winners as follows:

### 74th Coupe Mondiale

1st: Olzhas NURFANOV (Kazakhstan)  
2nd: Michele BIANCO (Italy)  
3rd: Roman PUNEIKO (Ukraine)

### Masters Coupe Mondiale

1st: Petar DINCIC (Serbia)  
2nd: Loris DOUYEZ (Belgium)  
3rd: Edvin HALILOVIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

### Junior Coupe Mondiale

1st: Peter MILOVANOV (Russia)  
2nd: Mykola SYNIAHIVSKIY (Ukraine)  
3rd: Artem ISHCENKO (Ukraine)

### International Competition for Virtuoso Entertainment Music

1st: Dantong WANG (China)  
2nd: Nikodem SOBEK (Poland)  
3rd: Vladimir KASHUTA (Ukraine)

### Junior International Competition for Virtuoso Entertainment Music

1st: Mathias RUGSVEEN (Norway)  
2nd: Emanuele VITI (Italy)  
3rd: Sofia SANTORELLI (Italy)



### International Competition for Ensemble Music - Classical Music

1st: Sirius Accordion Trio (Italy), Michele BIANCO (Accordion), Alberto NARDELLI (Accordion), Pietro SECUNDO (Accordion)  
2nd: Duo Amuse (Russia), Arseniy STROKOVSKIY (Accordion), Michiru SOEDA (Violin)  
3rd: Musical Moment (Russia), Alexander NEKRASOV (Accordion), Arseny ISTOMIN (Domra), Alexander SHMOILOV (Balalaika)

### International Competition for Ensemble Music - World Music

1st: Das Kollektiv Duo (Austria), Raphael BRUNNER (Accordion), Juan Carlos DIAZ-BUENO (Flute)  
2nd: Musical Moment (Russia), Alexander NEKRASOV (Accordion), Arseny ISTOMIN (Domra), Alexander SHMOILOV (Balalaika)

Plans are underway for the 75th Coupe Mondiale to be held in Zofingen, Switzerland, October 4-9, 2022.

For more information on upcoming events and a full review of this year's Coupe Mondiale, please visit [coupemondiale.org](http://coupemondiale.org). The review includes pictures and reports of the daily events as well as videos of the concerts, each contestant's performance, and the full results including each adjudicator's marks.



## Long Island Accordion Alliance with Guest Artist Frank Toscano

The next meeting of the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) will take place on Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 6:00pm at La Villini Restaurant, 288 Larkfield Rd., East Northport, NY 11731. Reservations are recommended by calling (631) 261-6344.

The featured guest artist will be noted accordionist, Frank Toscano, who was recently featured in the movie, "The Many Saints of Newark." Frank Toscano was asked to arrange and perform music for the movie soundtrack, which was released worldwide on March 12, 2021. Frank recorded eight songs and performed in the movie. He appears in the film with guitarist, Steve Lucas, in the scene of the confirmation party for Janice, Tony's sister. The movie is a prequel to the popular series, "The Sopranos".

Among the songs Frank performed were "Ferry Boat Serenade," "Volare," "The Nearness of You," and "Core Grate." Frank said the director and cast enthusiastically applauded him at the end of the scene. The music/soundtrack was recorded at The Hit Factory in New York City. The challenge, according to Frank, was to play the song during filming exactly as it was recorded at The Hit Factory since that recording was used during the filming of the movie. Of course, Frank was easily able to accomplish the task.



A professional musician since the age of eight, Frank Toscano has made music his entire life. Born and raised in New York, Frank came from an Italian family who valued the idea of music being played in the house constantly. Without a choice from his father, Frank took lessons on the accordion under the direction of Emilio Chiesa and never dreamed that it would become the passion of his life!

Frank said, "Emilio provided me with a solid classical foundation, for which I am forever grateful. I was very fortunate to have such a great teacher who is also a virtuoso accordionist." As Frank continued practicing through the years, he mastered the instrument and it was only natural for him to become a professional musician. He wanted more though...more music... and so he learned, studied jazz, and mastered the art of playing the piano (taught himself), and at the age of 21 opened the Frank Toscano Music School.

Now, some 50 years later, the school continues to flourish with young and not-so-young talent. Still teaching everyday, his undying passion for music and performing never seems to subside. He has performed live with and for many artists including Michail Baryshnikov and Aidan Quinn, and can also be heard on many recordings of other artists...too numerous to mention. Frank performed for Steve Schirripa and the entire Soprano's cast to help launch an up-and-coming new TV show.

He has also had the pleasure of performing with Joe Piscopo and vocalist Debra Toscano. Frank has performed many steady engagements at many prominent clubs in the Tri-State area, such as the Playboy Club, North Hempstead Country Club, and Rockland Country Club. Currently you can hear Frank perform solo at the Magnanini Winery and also in concert with the newly-formed "Amazing Accordion Kings." Among his accomplishments, Frank arranged, conducted, and performed on three great CD's: "Accordion to Frank," a solo CD which embraces the flavor of traditional-styled music laced with a hint of modern jazz, paying homage to his accordion heritage. The "Amazing Accordion Kings" Volumes One and Two were arranged, performed, and conducted with two other great accordionists, Angelo DiPippo and Manny Corallo. These latest CDs contain compilations of opera to jazz. Frank Toscano, a true musician, a true professional...and most certainly a true artist.



Frank says, "The future of the accordion is bright. It's a beautiful sound, and with modern technology, electronic accordions will help make it popular again." Frank Toscano is an inspiration to all accordionists and demonstrates clearly that the accordion is a necessary and integral part of the world of music.

Attendees at the Long Island Accordion Alliance meeting are welcome to bring accordions and invited to perform in the Open Mic segment of the evening. Guests are invited to begin the new year by joining the LIAA for an enjoyable evening of fine dining and accordion music.

For more information on the LIAA meeting please contact [dkarcic10@gmail.com](mailto:dkarcic10@gmail.com).

## Stas Venglevski with the Jefferson Symphony Orchestra in Colorado



Dr. William Morse, Joan Grauman, Joan Cochran Sommers, Stas Venglevski

Accordionist Stas Venglevski recently performed the beautiful and seldom heard work, Concerto No. 2 in E Minor, by Anthony Galla-Rini. The performance, held on October 17, 2021, was with the Jefferson Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Musical Director and Principal Conductor Dr. William Morse. Only the second time the complete work has been performed with Symphony Orchestra, Stas had previously given the world premiere on April 6, 2003 with the University of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, conducted by David Becker, with Galla-Rini in attendance.

Galla-Rini composed his first concerto in 1941. During this time, he performed on a Galanti Dominator Accordion with multiple left hand registers. With this instrument, which did not have free bass, he exploited all these left hand registers as if it were a free bass giving him many octaves of left hand range.

He then wished to write a concerto for accordion with free bass, which resulted in his Concerto No. 2 composed in 1976, which took six months to complete.

The Concerto was first performed with piano accompaniment, by Rocky Frost, a student of Donald Balestrieri, and later Nick Ariando performed the first movement with the Los Angeles Orchestra of the Performing Arts under the direction of Louis Palange during the annual festival of the Accordion Federation of North America.

Both the first and second concerti were composed in their original forms for accordion and orchestra, as Mr. Galla-

Rini said he was always thinking in an orchestral manner. Later, piano reductions were made for the orchestral accompaniment. When asked why both concerti were composed in a minor key, Maestro Galla-Rini said it was just the inspiration as the decision, perhaps taking into consideration that the minor key might have been more dramatic than the major key.

Stas's performance of the Concerto No. 2 with the University of Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, conducted by David Becker, was the world premiere of the work, marking the first time the piece had been played in its entirety with Symphony Orchestra.

Stas, in addition to being recognized as a prolific composer, is renowned for his artistry and technical command. A native of the Republic of Moldova, he is a two-time first prize winner of bayan competition in the Republic of Moldova. 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, he immigrated to the United States in 1992. For more information, please visit [www.stasv.com](http://www.stasv.com).

**SEASON PREMIERE: OCTOBER 17, 2021**  
 William Morse, principal conductor  
 Stas Venglevski, bayan accordion

**DVOŘÁK**  
 Carnival Overture  
**GALLA-RINI**  
 Concerto No. 2 for Accordion  
**DVOŘÁK**  
 Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

Jefferson Symphony 2021/21 Season Premiere  
 Sun Oct 17, 2021 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM MDT Green Center, Colorado School of Mines, 80401

## The Accordion in the Media Spanning the Decades Part 1: The Late 1920s to 1960 by Joan Grauman, AAA Historian

Mass media was – and is today – a very important mirror of who we were and who we are as a society. While this form of communicating and promoting thoughts, facts, events, and ideas has changed monumentally over the past 100 years, one thing has not changed: mass media clearly reflects our past and our present.

Over the decades, the accordion in the media has been "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly...and the Good Again." Part 1 of this article will focus on "the Good;" Part 2: "the Bad, the Ugly...and the Good Again."

Benjamin Franklin, one of our country's founding fathers, is credited with creating the first printed advertisements in a magazine, "General Magazine," in 1741. By the early 20th century, printed advertisements were in newspapers, periodicals, and posters. These ads attracted people to what was being sold by featuring popular and attractive people, scenes, and objects. Stories of the glamorous vaudeville, Hollywood, and radio celebrities were also featured in the magazines. Soon, the beautiful and intriguing "new" musical instrument, the accordion, was in ads and stories everywhere.

In the 1930s and 40s, many Hollywood stars wanted to be photographed holding accordions. Some even learned to play the instrument. The well-loved star Jimmy Stewart played the accordion and was brought in for a photo shoot in 1938 for the Accordion World Magazine, and he was featured on one of its covers. Jimmy Stewart died in 1987. With the many photos from movies and his promotional shots through the decades, it was a true tribute to his beloved accordion when he chose a photo from this 1938 photo shoot as his all-time favorite. It was the featured photo in the Washington Post Magazine when he passed away.

Some of the other early celebrities who played – or were photographed playing – the accordion were Fred Astaire and his sister Adele, Sophia Loren, Ginger Rogers,

Charlie Chaplin, producer Frank Capra, Walter Brennan and James Cagney. Composer Leroy Anderson, famous violinist Jascha Heifetz, and pianist and big band leader Duke Ellington were also accordionists!

Hollywood star Donald O'Connor started his acting career at very young age and found time to also study the accordion.



The accordion was not just featured in Hollywood. It could be found in cigarette ads and even in the hands of Mickey Mouse during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s.

At Christmas time, the accordion could be found on countless greeting cards in the hands of Santa Claus, angels, and carolers.

Stayed tuned for Part 2 in our upcoming editions of the AAA Newsletter!

### Frank Busso, Sr. to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award



We look forward to presenting Frank Busso, Sr. with the AAA Lifetime Achievement Award during the upcoming AAA Festival to be held July 13-17, 2022 at the Marriott Philadelphia West, 111 Crawford Avenue, Conshohocken, PA 19428.

Frank has faithfully served the AAA as president (1981 and 1992-94), vice president, treasurer, comptroller, and chairperson of many committees, including the annual national festivals, and the Young Artists Concert Series. For decades, he has been a contestant, performer, educator, conductor, and all-around ambassador of the accordion.

For more information, please visit [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com).

## AAA Composers Commissioning Committee's Latest Commission Premiered at the 2021 Virtual AAA Master Class and Concert Series, by Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Committee Chairperson

Dr. The AAA had the unusual though pleasant experience of unveiling its first “virtual” premiere of a commissioned work this summer, namely “Redbud Winter,” by New York accordionist/composer Will Holshouser, performed by the composer and trumpeter Eric Vloeimans.

Will Holshouser is an accordionist, composer, and improviser whose music draws on a wide variety of inspirations, from traditional accordion folk styles to jazz, hymns, classical, and experimental music. Embracing clear melodies, pulsating rhythms, and contrapuntal textures, Will’s music seeks to celebrate a polyglot attitude, engaging both written and improvisational approaches. As a working musician in New York who participates in many genres from around the world, he distills these experiences into his own compositions, exploring new sounds while staying in touch with the accordion’s expressive qualities and sense of fun.



Will began playing accordion in the late 1980s when a friend gave him a musty old squeezebox as a surprise. Since that time, he has performed all over the world. Highlights have included touring and recording with violinist Regina Carter, clarinetist David Krakauer, and trumpeter Eric Vloeimans, as well as with his own groups. Three albums of his music for the Will Holshouser Trio, featuring Ron Horton and Dave Phillips, were released on the Portuguese label Clean Feed. A collaborative trio, Musette Explosion, made an album that received widespread acclaim and was featured in an interview on NPR’s Fresh Air. Will has also written music for film, theater, and dance.

Will studied accordion and composition with Dr. William Schimmel, appearing annually at his AAA-sponsored master class and concert series. He has also studied composition with Tania León and Dalit Warsaw at Brooklyn College, and has performed with Guy Klucevsek, New York City Ballet, New York City Opera, Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, Suzanne Vega, Han Bennink & Michael Moore, Uri Caine, Andy Statman, Mark Morris Dance, and in various Broadway shows. Born in Arkansas, he grew up in Cambridge, MA and lives in Brooklyn with his wife and daughter.

“Redbud Winter” is a duet for B-flat trumpet and accordion, though the composer offers two alternate versions in which the trumpet is replaced by B-flat clarinet or a second accordion, the latter rendered in “C-score.” In addition, the accordion parts offer both free bass and stradella left-hand alternatives, leaving the choice to the performer, as has often

been the custom with AAA commissioned concert works. A description of the work by the composer follows:

“Drawing on jazz and folk music, Redbud Winter celebrates several of my favorite aspects of American accordion playing. The title is an expression from the southern Appalachians that refers to a time in early spring when cold snaps cause the redbud trees to bloom. This poetic phrase embraces a paradox, the overlap of winter and spring, snow and flowers, desolation and rebirth. The co-mingling of loss and regeneration is a constant part of human life, but especially in the spring of this year when the pandemic began to lift. At that time all of us felt a sense of joy and release, while continuing to reckon with profound losses. The piece is dedicated to my mother, Cynthia Shoemaker, who passed away this year in April.

*Continued on next page...*

## *Composers Commissioning...continued from previous page*

“Musically, ‘Redbud Winter’ draws on various traditions from the broad scope of (North) American music – rhythms refracted from zydeco and blues, jazz harmony, and pentatonic melodies that might recall bluegrass or Cajun music. Compositional influences include Béla Bartók’s 44 Violin Duos and his concept of folk music as an “archaic avant-garde,” a source of ideas to be explored outside of either Romantic or modernist schools. Bartók set a sterling example for composers who want to explore folk music in an inclusive way while renouncing nationalism. I’ve always loved Duke Ellington’s harmonies, and his profound melodies that sometimes rub incisively against them. Taking inspiration from those, the middle part of ‘Redbud Winter’ is a jazz waltz structure with an optional section for improvisation. There is also a passage modeled after the canonic sonatas of Georg Philipp Telemann: one player begins, and the other follows a bar or two later, playing the same melody in an extended, linear canon.”

Will wrote the piece with his friend Eric Vloeimans in mind, and describes him as “a brilliant trumpeter with a uniquely warm sound.” They will perform “Redbud Winter” this coming fall on a tour in the Netherlands. See [www.willholshouser.com](http://www.willholshouser.com) or [www.ericvloemans.nl](http://www.ericvloemans.nl) for tour details.

## **Dr. William Schimmel in Concert**

Dr. William Schimmel is keeping a very busy concert schedule, covering a diverse array of engagements. His versatility is evident by the many musical projects in which he is involved, ranging from solo engagements to work with the New York Metropolitan Opera.

Dr. Schimmel holds a BM, MS, and DMA degrees Doctorate from The Juilliard School. He performed with virtually every ensemble in New York including The New York Philharmonic, The Metropolitan Opera, Jazz at Lincoln Center, a variety of contemporary ensembles, and Broadway, as well as numerous European tours.

His Tango Project compact discs have reached No. 1 on the Billboard charts along with Stereo Review Album of the Year and Grammy nominations. He has performed on many movie soundtracks and can be seen and heard in “Scent of a Woman,” starring Oscar winner Al Pacino. His current CD, “The Theater of the Accordion,” features trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and has reached No. 2 on the Amazon charts. (They perform a six-minute version of Mahler’s 9th Symphony). He has performed with rock stars as diverse as Sting and Tom Waits who stated: “Bill Schimmel doesn’t play the Accordion; he IS the Accordion.”

Dr. Schimmel resides in Manhattan with his wife, Micki Goodman, a dancer/choreographer and video artist. Together they have produced numerous videos that can be seen and heard on YouTube. Dr. Schimmel’s works are currently being archived at the Lincoln Center Performing Arts Library.

His upcoming 2022 performances include:

- January 15 - Composers Concordance Concert of Graphic Scores - Machiko Studios, New York, which includes the premiere of Dr. Schimmel’s “King Akkong” for Accordion and mixed ensemble
- January 24 - Lincoln Center, New York - “Not Entirely Schubert” - curated by Dr. William Schimmel
- May 13, 18, 21, 26, 31, June 4 and 9, 2022 - Performances in “Hamlet” by Brett Dean - The Metropolitan Opera - Lincoln Center, New York
- July 29, 30 and 31, 2022 - “The Seminars 2022 - Too Much Information, So Little Time But We Do It Anyway,” sponsored by The Accordion Global Association - venue to be announced

For further information please contact [Accordionbill@gmail.com](mailto:Accordionbill@gmail.com).



## A Glorious Christmas Concert

Accordionist Mario Tacca and vocalist Mary Mancini presented their annual Glorious Christmas Concert on December 17 at the Assumption Church in Peekskill, NY.

The concert featured trumpeter Peter Blume and the Assumption Choir, directed by Donna Sticco and accompanied by Anne Dwyer.

AAA Board of Directors member Mario Tacca was born in Italy. During his childhood, his family moved to the Alsace Lorraine region of France where he began his musical studies. This is where his love and desire to play the accordion began.

An accomplished musician, Mario Tacca dazzles audiences across the US and around the world with his outstanding virtuosity and his exciting interpretations of international music, the classics, and pop.

Internationally acclaimed vocalist Mary Mancini has been featured in the New York Times, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, and the Journal News and has performed in a variety of venues around the world. Able to sing in eight different languages, she is adept at pop, show tunes, operatic arias, and sacred music and has received worldwide acclaim.

As a dynamic and popular performing duo, Mario and Mary have completed two concert tours of China. As guests of the China Ministry of Culture, they toured five cities in three weeks and performed with three symphony orchestras.

Joining them on their tour was highly acclaimed Chinese tenor, Douglas Song. In addition to performing with the symphony orchestras, some of the most memorable moments included a performance held at the 1600-seat True Color Jazz Supper Club in the booming city of Shenzhen and in the 3500-seat Golden Opera House.

Proceeds of the Glorious Christmas Concert were put toward the restoration of the Pipe Organ. For further information on their upcoming performances and recordings, please visit <http://gioiaproductions.com>.



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## Christmas Fun in New Zealand

AAA Board of Directors member Kevin Friedrich and his team took some Christmas fun to his former school, the Dargaville Primary School, in his hometown of Dargaville, New Zealand. Performing for more than 400 young children over a series of shows, the Christmas theme was a popular hit with the young students ranging in age from 5 to 10 years, nearing the end of their school year.

Combining performance, education, movement, dance, and student participation, the cast of characters included popular guests Rudolph, Frosty, and Santa. The students participated by singing, dancing, movement, and assisting with percussion.

Kevin began his accordion lessons at this very school, when the accordion was offered as part of the additional school curriculum offerings. In addition to Rudolph, Frosty, and Santa, Kevin was joined by Christine Johnston (student conductor, Editor of the Accordions Worldwide weekly news, and weekend manager at the Dargaville Museum), Ros Gilmour (vocalist) and Linda Emmett Litt (timpani, percussion, and daughter of Kevin's original accordion teacher at the Dargaville Primary School, Doreen Emmett).

In addition to the school concerts, Kevin along with his fellow musicians Linda Emmett Litt and Ros Gilmour brought the Dargaville Museum to life as they performed among the displays during an open live music day on December 11. The Dargaville Museum houses the magnificent "Accordion Gems, a Master Collection of Accordions through Time" exhibition, showcasing 140 instruments from the early 1830s to the present. The accordions are housed in the Music wing of the Museum, which also houses extensive collections of Maritime articles and local and regional history pertaining to the early settlers. For more information, please visit [www.kevinfriedrich.com](http://www.kevinfriedrich.com).

