



# AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION

# Newsletter

The official membership publication of the American Accordionists' Association

Autumn 2023

## From the Editor

### Welcome to the Autumn 2023 Edition of the AAA Newsletter!

The AAA celebrated its first live event in some time, holding the AAA Competition and Festival, celebrating the 85th Anniversary of the organization. For full coverage, be sure to enjoy the Daily Reports found on the AAA website at [www.ameraccord.com/festival.php](http://www.ameraccord.com/festival.php).

Since our last edition of the Newsletter, there has been a terrific amount of work going on behind the scenes. We know you will have enjoyed taking the time to read the extensive new material that is being continuously added to the AAA website over the last few months, covering the 85th Festival, extensive reviews of the AAA Commissions, and the incredible history of the AAA and those who have helped shape it over the years.

My sincere thanks to our Newsletter Publisher, AAA President Frank Busso Jr. As always, I would also like to thank our secretary, Rita Barnea, for her outstanding work in helping source accordion events and news items to include in our Newsletter publications.

Items for the December 2023 Newsletter 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 to ensure they are included in the upcoming issue.

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



## From the President

Happy Thanksgiving to my fellow AAA members!

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our 85th Anniversary Festival in Pennsylvania. The event was loaded with premier performers, presenters, contestants, and exhibitors, and I can't wait for our next big gathering!



I invite you to become an AAA member for the first time, renew your membership, donate to AAA programs that are most meaningful to you, interact with us on social media, and to join us for our upcoming events to celebrate and promote our beloved instrument. And please explore our website - [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com) - where you can develop a deeper appreciation for AAA history, learn about commissioned works, live through past events like it's the first time, and enter the 2024 Elsie M. Bennett Accordion Composition Competition.

On behalf of the AAA governing board, thank you to our dedicated AAA members! You are vital to the growth of our organization, and we are excited to work with you to continually promote the accordion.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Very best musical wishes,  
Frank Busso Jr, AAA President

# 85th Anniversary AAA Festival in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania



The many activities of the 85th Anniversary AAA Festival began on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 with exhibits, competitions, a workshop, and socializing during our Meet & Greet Reception. Thursday started off with two workshops and more competitions before celebrating Accordion Day at the King of Prussia Mall. When we returned to the hotel in the afternoon, we had our first AAA Festival Orchestra rehearsal, followed by Pasta Night, with entertainment provided by AAA champion Mario Tacca, acclaimed vocalist Mary Mancini, and the Westmont Philharmonia Accordion Orchestra directed by Joanna Darrow.

Friday included time in the Exhibit Room, a pair of morning workshops, and our Luncheon Concert with entertainment provided by world champion Grayson Masefield, AAA Coupe Mondiale representative Nathan Chapeton, and the Westmont Accordion Club. That was followed by two more afternoon workshops, competitions, the second AAA Festival Orchestra rehearsal, and our Gala Concert featuring Grammy winner Joey Miskulin, world champion Grayson Masefield, AAA champion Mario Tacca, and the Accordion Pops Orchestra conducted by Al Terzo.

On Saturday, there were more workshops, competitions, another visit to the Exhibit Room, our awards concert, and the final AAA Festival Orchestra rehearsal. The Gala Banquet included the 2023 AAA Festival Orchestra conducted by world-famous conductor Joan Cochran Sommers, The United States Air Force Strolling Strings with accordionist Senior Master Sergeant Frank Busso Jr, and the AAA Lifetime Achievement Award presentation to

Frank Busso Sr. Finally, during Sunday's breakfast and open meeting, we had a chance to recap the festival and gathered attendees' ideas for future AAA events and initiatives. We hope you can join us for our future events!

## Grayson Masefield at A World of Accordions in Superior, Wisconsin

Internationally-acclaimed accordionist Grayson Masefield presented a concert at A World of Accordions Museum in Superior, WI on July 30, 2023.

Grayson Masefield is a New Zealand born accordionist and was the first person to win world championships in classical, virtuoso, and digital accordion categories. He is the Instrumental Music Teacher for Accordion at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Born in Auckland, New Zealand, he has studied in France with Frederic Deschamps and completed his university education in Lausanne, Switzerland with the late Stephane Chapuis.

He is regularly invited to adjudicate and/or appear as Guest Artist at international competitions he has previously won: CIA in Italy, China & Russia, CMA in USA & Portugal, Primus Ikaalinen in Finland, and Roland International in Rome.

At the 2010 Coupe Mondiale, Varaždin, Croatia, Grayson was elected to the prestigious CIA Music Committee and today is Vice-Chairman of the CIA Music Committee.

Over the years, Grayson has performed in many countries, presenting varied programs from serious concert works to entertainment music, original pieces, and works with digital media. His extensive repertoire can be heard on his three albums as well as many live performances on YouTube.

He has worked with several of the world's leading composers such as Frank Angelis (France), Gorka Hermosa (Spain), Petri Makkonen (Finland), and Gary Daverne (New Zealand) to perform and record new original works for the accordion.

Proceeds from the event were generously donated to the Museum in support of their efforts to tell the accordion's story for generations to come.



## 2023 AAA Competition Results

This year's AAA competition featured students of all ages and levels of proficiency. They were adjudicated by Frank Busso Sr, Beverly Roberts Curnow, Dee Langley, and Grayson Masefield, Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Joey Miskulin, and Joan Cochran Sommers. Our results are as follows:

### Honors Solo Juniorette

Julianna Busso 1st  
Iven Kavich 2nd

### Honors Solo Junior

Maksim Liam Toft 1st  
Caroline Lammers 2nd  
Ava Yip 3rd

### Honors Solo Intermediate

Max Hoffmann 1st  
Alexander Lammers 2nd

### Open Solo Juniorette

Julianna Busso SILVER  
Iven Kavich GOLD

### Open Solo Junior

Caroline Lammers GOLD  
Vladimir Maximilian Stefanik GOLD

### Open Solo Intermediate

Max Hoffmann GOLD  
Alexander Lammers GOLD

### Open Solo Adult

Mike Silvia SILVER

### Pop Solo Juniorette

Francesca Busso SILVER

### Pop Solo Junior

Nicholas Busso GOLD

### Ethnic Solo Adult

Mike Silvia GOLD

### Founders Solo Adult

Mike Silvia SILVER

### Entertainment AAA

Busso Festival Orchestra

### Evaluation Band

Acme Adult Preparatory Band

### Evaluation Duet

Janine Lenguadoro &  
Michelle Reasso

### Evaluation Solo

Gabe Abreu  
Dan Badecki  
Karen Blisnuk (2 entries)  
Francesca Busso  
Julianna Busso  
Ethan Davenport  
Kaidson Davis (2 entries)  
Lisa DeAngelis  
Kathy Haywood  
Iven Kavich  
Bob Klatte  
Daniel Latch  
Janine Lenguadoro  
Judy Monro  
Michelle Reasso  
Dan Riccio  
Grace Wu  
Ava Yip



Prize money for this year's Honors Categories was once again generously donated by The Mary and Frank Tokarski Musical Arts Fund. This fund, managed by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (Connecticut), was established in 2018. It was created by Mary Tokarski to honor her late husband Frank, who lovingly supported her music through the decades, and for her to give young people the ability to "experience the enrichment and the joy that comes from making music." The AAA thanks Mary for this beautiful, ongoing legacy.



## 76th Coupe Mondiale in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) held their 76th Coupe Mondiale and the 150th CIA International General Assembly of Delegates Congress in Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event was hosted by the CIA member Association of Artists (Bijeljina) on September 5-9, 2023.

The Coupe Mondiale is an international competition for accordionists held under the auspices of the CIA, founded in 1935 in France. The CIA is a member of the International Music Council (IMC), an NGO official partner of UNESCO.

In addition to the Coupe Mondiale in Bijeljina, several important cultural and musical events were held in the neighboring city of Ugljevik. The Mayor of Ugljevik Vasilije Perić and President of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbska Zoran Lazić hosted a series of events in Ugljevik to help celebrate the 76th Coupe Mondiale being held in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CIA delegates and guests were invited to partake in the annual Festival of Plum, Fruit, Rakija and Honey, as well as gala Luncheon receptions, a roundtable discussion with city officials and an International Concert. CIA 2023 Honorary Vice President Slaviša Perić coordinated a series of activities including media interviews and concerts and other performances showcasing the unique cultural heritage found in the surrounding areas.

The Ugljevik Concert featured an impressive lineup of four CIA Coupe Mondiale World Champions including Kirill Rusinov (2019 from Russia), Alexander Selivanov (2004 from Russia), Olzhas Nurlanov (2021 from Kazakhstan), and Grayson Masefield (2009 from New Zealand). The finale of the concert featured Alexander Selivanov (Russia), Mirco Patarini (Italy), and Grayson Masefield (New Zealand) performing a work by the popular Motion Trio.

This year's Coupe Mondiale was won by the outstanding Serbian accordionist Luka Simic. Results for the 7 categories of competitions were as follows:



### 76th Coupe Mondiale

- 1st: Luka Simic (Serbia)
- 2nd: Hang Ding (China)
- 3rd: Petar Dincic (Serbia)

### International Competition for

#### Virtuoso Entertainment Music

- 1st: Aleksandr Komelkov (Russia)
- 2nd: Lev Solomonovich (Moldova)
- 3rd: Dmitrii Milentev (Russia)

#### International Competition for Ensemble Music - Classical Music

- 1st: Northern Lights (Russia)
- 2nd: Trio Accofem (Serbia)
- 3rd: Langlang Juvenile Quartet (China)

### Masters Coupe Mondiale

- 1st: Alexeyv Loganov (Russia)
- 2nd: Stefan Dimitrijevic (Serbia)
- 3rd: Lev Solomonovich, (Moldova)

### Junior International Competition for

#### Virtuoso Entertainment Music

- 1st: Francesco Scarselli (Italy)
- 2nd: Miguel Coelho (Portugal)
- 3rd: Bruna Palma (Portugal)

#### International Competition for Ensemble Music - World Music

- 1st: Northern Lights (Russia)
- 2nd: Trio Artists (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

### Junior Coupe Mondiale

- 1st: Li Yijin (China)
- 2nd: Gong Youming (China)
- 3rd: Gabriele Corsaro (Italy)

*Please visit [www.coupemondiale.org](http://www.coupemondiale.org) for a full review of activities Coupe Mondiale activities, including daily reports, photos, and videos of all competitors and concerts.*

#### CIA Executive Committee

Sweden - Jörgen Sundqvist (Vice President), USA - Kevin Friedrich (Ambassador), China - Li Cong (Vice President), North Macedonia - Zorica Karakutovska (Vice President), Finland - Kimmo Mattila (General Secretary), Italy - Mirco Patarini (President), Russia - Alexander Selivanov (Chairperson of the Music Committee), USA - Joan Sommers (Honorary Member), New Zealand - Harley Jones (Public Relations Manager)



## Michael Bridge and Ladom Ensemble in Spring Concerts

The Ladom Ensemble, comprised of Michael Bridge (accordion), Beth Silver (cello), Adam Campbell (hand percussion), and Pouya Hamidi (piano), presented a series of Spring concerts in Ontario and British Columbia.

The Ladom Ensemble creates a unique blend of acoustic chamber and world music that is passionate, sophisticated, and wild. The group met and formed in 2007 while studying music at the University of Toronto. Individual members hail from Alberta (Michael Bridge), Toronto (Beth Silver), Prince Edward Island (Adam Campbell), and Ontario by way of Tehran, Iran (Pouya Hamidi). Pouya, the in-house composer, writes original music for the group inspired by Persian and classical fusion, but the Canadian spread of the group also reaches across the world and genres as their all-original repertoire incorporates inspirations from Argentinean tango, Serbian folk and dance traditions, Persian classical repertoire, as well as music from the Classical (Bach, Prokofiev) and progressive rock worlds (Radiohead).

Ladom doesn't pretend to represent any one tradition, but rather expresses an authentically Canadian experience. Ladom's musical identity is combined from many sources and reflects a beautiful new world with a Western classical toolset. They also commission original music by local, Canadian composers such as Elisha Denburg, Igor Correia, Maziar Heidari, Keyan Emami, Saman Shahi, and Afarin Mansouri.

Accordionist Dr. Michael Bridge who recently earned his doctorate in accordion at University of Toronto, brings his whole heart and ballooning talent to the ensemble, despite

being extremely active performing around the world, from orchestras to solo recitals. He has been named one of CBC's "30 Hot Classical Musicians Under 30" and does over 100 concerts per year. Sock-foot on stage, Adam Campbell (M. Mus) passes around a twinkle-in-the-eye during performances, and always brings the bottles...as part of his hand percussion toolkit! Cellist Beth Silver (M. Mus) starts spontaneous jams in between takes, with playful sounds that can only be called "fiddling around." Pouya Hamidi (M. Mus) usually emerges from rehearsals declaring, "They're such sweethearts!" In performance and composition, the pianist has a deep love for the music and a profound humbleness that makes bragging impossible, although warranted. All are active, professional musicians in various contexts.

To date, Ladom has toured and enthralled audiences across the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Labrador, and Prince Edward Island. They have completed four major tours in Canada alone: a 38-day tour of Ontario and Quebec with Jeunesses Musicales Canada (Fall of 2017), a 3-week tour with Debut Atlantic (Spring 2018), a 3-week tour with Prairie Debut (Winter 2019), and finally another 35-day tour with Jeunesses Musicales Canada (March-April 2019). They have also been presented by Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival. CBC, Radio-Canada, the Whole-Note magazine, and the BBC have featured Ladom in print and video media. Ladom has been selected to showcase at multiple arts conferences including CAPACOA, OSAC, Ontario Contact, and Arts Northwest.



The words of Ladom's reviewers couldn't be clearer. CBC's Errol Nazareth praised Ladom's first, self-titled album: "I can honestly say that this is the first time I have heard such a fascinating mix and it really works well. The music can be very elegant and contemplative and it can also be rocking and fiery... there is no denying the passion of the four musicians investing in their playing." Grant agencies are in agreement with the press! Both Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts have awarded Ladom Ensemble multiple grants.

For more information on upcoming performances and recordings, go to [www.ladomensemble.com](http://www.ladomensemble.com) or email [ladomensemble@gmail.com](mailto:ladomensemble@gmail.com).

## Dwayne Dopsie Grammy Award

Accordionist Dwayne Dopsie recently won a Grammy for Best Music Film in the 65th Annual Grammy Awards. Dwayne Dopsie was the winner of the AAA-sponsored Search for the Hottest Accordionist, an initiative of AAA President Emerita Faithe Deffner, held at the Welk Resort in Branson, MO in March 1999.

Dwayne hails from one of the most influential Zydeco families in the world. Dwayne is the youngest of eight children. His dad is Rockin' Dopsie Sr, who is generally accredited for the birth of zydeco. Though inspired by tradition, Dwayne has developed his own high-energy style that defies existing stereotypes and blazes a refreshingly distinct path for 21st century zydeco music. This singer/songwriter and accordionist has performed all over the world since debuting his band, Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hellraisers, at age 19.

Dopsie has traveled internationally with his band, the Zydeco Hellraisers, but his love for his home state of Louisiana and Jazz Fest in New Orleans makes this the most consecutive festival he has performed at, over 20 times. The Louisiana native writes both the lyrics and music for his songs and describes the upcoming album as soulful with a touch of blues and old-time zydeco feel.



Dwayne Dopsie grew up in Lafayette, Louisiana, teaching himself how to play accordion, watching videos of his father and Clifton Chenier, recording himself with a video camera, and going back and watch it and playing over and over for hours until it was right. The knowledge of Dwayne's musical ability, along with Zydeco Hellraisers band members, are combined to have over 100 years of experience playing zydeco music and it shows in every performance. The energy, true talent, and exuberance that Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hellraisers emit from stage makes it obvious that there is no competition for this band.

Not only has Dwayne's band mastered zydeco music but he has also won multiple awards:

- 2022 Grammy winner for "Jazz Fest a New Orleans Story"
- 2022 Big Easy award Best Zydeco Band
- Two-time Grammy nominee 2012-2018
- 20-time Offbeat Winner, Best Accordion, Best Band, Zydeco Album, Best Zydeco Artist
- Big Easy Award Winner
- 1999 AAA Search for the Hottest Accordionist

Dwayne Dopsie is on LouisianaTravel.com's "Top 100 Reasons to Visit Louisiana" list as number 29, so there's a lot Dwayne and the band can be proud of! Their music reaches everyone and is for everyone. They also add rhythm and blues, funk, rock and roll, reggae, and pop to their performances, making them a very versatile choice for any audience.

Dwayne has an outgoing personality and interacts with the crowd, blurring the barrier between performer and audience. Audiences jump to their feet energized by Dwayne's musical innovation, charismatic performance, and sheer, raw talent. His ability to capture the imagination, heart, and soul of his audience makes Dwayne one of today's most dynamic performers.

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

## World Accordion Day and Dr. Willard A. Palmer Festival

A World of Accordions Museum presented their World Accordion Day Festival 2023 on May 5-7 at its museum in Superior, WI.

Friday, May 5 was the Dr. Willard A. Palmer Festival, showcasing some of the museum's instruments by Dr. Helmi Harrington; a visit with Dr. Palmer's son, Bill Palmer III; an introduction to diatonics and concertinas; plus Art Bjornjeld with some story-telling, traditional folk music, and good-natured "Poke Fun at Minnesota" tales. The evening was topped off with a well-received concert by Japanese accordionists Mihoko Goto and Chiharu Ebihara.



Saturday, May 6 celebrated World Accordion Day starting with a free public event featuring accordionist and children's musician, Jane Christison. This fun, family-friendly performance included an accordion petting zoo so the young and not-so-young could test drive an accordion.

Saturday afternoon's lineup started with Kenneth Bressler talking about Moog Synthesizers to virtual and early electronic accordions. Known as the Great Entertainer, the always-popular Florian Chmielewski attracted many of his local fans, followed by Mike Middleton with a presentation

and performance of Myron Floren's music. The afternoon session ended with a performance of international music by the Accordion Concertina Music (ACM) Band conducted by Dee Langley. Saturday night featured author and poet Dr. Anthony Bukowski, who gave a presentation of story telling and music.

The successful event concluded on Sunday morning with Mike Middleton and tuba player, Clayton Capps, leading a group of convention accordionists in a free nondenominational polka service.

Visit [www.worldofaccordions.org](http://www.worldofaccordions.org) for future events and information!

## World Premiere by Grayson Masefield

A most successful world premiere of "Meditatio" by Gorka Hermosa was performed by Grayson Masefield at the 2023 Accordionists & Teachers Guild, International (ATG) Festival in Lisle, IL.

"Meditatio" (2023) is a meditation on the irrationality of human barbarism that was commissioned by the ATG, thanks to ATG President Mary Ann Covone and Accordions Worldwide's Harley Jones. When approached for the commission, Gorka Hermosa proposed a melodic piece, as most commissioned works he receives are for virtuoso pieces. He thought that it was deeper to go in the opposite direction with a melodic work.

Gorka writes: "Meditatio tries to express the desolation in my soul in front of barbaric acts such as I previously showed in Gernika (1994), and in Fragilissimo (2000) showing that all depends on the point of view and our inability to understand the point of view of the people who thinks to the contrary of us. To compose Meditatio, I listened to the main melodic pieces written for accordion (Romance of Angelis, Kalina Krasnaya of Semionov...), music by Albeniz, Satie, Debussy... and finally I found the inspiration listening to Rachmaninoff (for the introduction of the piece) and Villalobos (Bachiana Brasileira No. 5) for the rest of the piece, departing from the improvisation on its harmony, to write what I finally composed in this piece."



## Eddie Monteiro at Shanghai Jazz Club in New Jersey

Accordionist Eddie Monteiro recently performed with well-known trumpet player Warren Vache and bass player Earl Sauls at the Shanghai Restaurant and Jazz Club in Madison, NJ.

Warren Vache's hard-earned skills enable him to craft swinging performances of beauty, emotion, and surprise. He is a tremendous trumpet and cornet player and, with his acerbic wit between songs, he keeps the entertainment rolling.

Eddie Monteiro is a recognized musician and educator with over 30 years of musical performance in classical, jazz, dance, theater, cabaret, and choral ensembles. He is well known for his harmonic skills and talent. He won several accordion championships as a youth and was also the youngest honoree elected to the American Accordionist's Hall of Fame. He was a member of Bobb Rosengarden, Skitch Henderson, Peter Duchin, Ray Bloch, Michael Lanin, and Marty Ames orchestras. Eddie performs in the New York Metropolitan area and worldwide.

Eddie Monteiro was a featured member of the pit orchestra on stage in the Broadway revivals of "Carnival" and "Evita" and recording of radio and television jingles for Sesame Street, General Foods, Colgate Palmolive, Anheuser-Busch, AT&T, Bennigan's Restaurants, Pontiac, and more.

Lead artist of innumerable society bands performing throughout the world at social events, political gatherings and corporation conventions. Eddie recently retired as the Music Teacher, Choral Director, Vocal and Instrumental Music Director for the Ann Street Elementary School. Eddie Monteiro has performed at jazz festivals throughout the world. National performances include the JVC Jazz Festival and the Toyota Jazz Festival in New York City, and the Salishan Jazz Festival and Centrum Jazz Festival, both in Washington. Internationally, Eddie was a guest at the North Sea Jazz

Festival in Holland, the Jakarta Jazz Festival in Indonesia, Sea Jazz Festival in Helsinki, the Norwegian National Accordion Competition, Sweden's Annual Accordion Festival in Ransatter, and in January 2000, Eddie closed the Jazz In El Tambo Festival in Punta del Esta, Uruguay performing with Paquito D'Rivera, Leny Andrade, John Patitucci, and Benny Golson.

A graduate of NYU with a B.S. in Music Education, Eddie studied accordion with Charles Nunzio (one of the founding members of the American Accordionists' Association), piano with Madame Olga Van Till, and advanced harmony studies with Marty Holmes. Eddie is a Certified Teacher Member of the AAA as well as a member of Music Educators' National Conference, National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Technology Institute for Music Educators, National Education Association, Jazz Educators Association the Sommelier Institute, and is an Amateur Radio General Class Operator.





## World Premiere of “Dargaville Impressions,” by Ian Watson

AAA Board of Directors member Kevin Friedrich recently presented the world premiere of a new work, “Dargaville Impressions,” by well-known English accordionist and composer Ian Watson, on May 28, 2023 in Dargaville, New Zealand. Written for accordion, organ, bass accordion, timpani, and glockenspiel, the two-movement work was commissioned by Kevin Friedrich in honor of the refurbishment of the historical organ at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church and the 150th anniversary of the Dargaville township.

The organ itself was a commission from New Zealand organ maker George Croft in 1925 by the Dargaville children upon the passing of their mother, Anne (Annie) Dargaville. Previously, the church’s dramatic stained-glass window had been added in memory of their father, the town’s 1872 founder, Joseph McMullen Dargaville. With this second refurbishment of the historical instrument, only the pipes remain from the original organ, but they have been proudly incorporated into the current bank of pipes found today.

Composer Ian Watson said he was impressed by the photos of Dargaville and how dramatic the light looked at times. “Dargaville Impressions” captures his impression of the town, without having actually visited it. The first movement features mostly the accordion, with support from organ, timpani, and bass accordion. He imagined the light coming into the church from the memorial stained-glass window. The second movement, “Annie,” is all about the organ featuring dramatic dynamic crescendos, resulting in echoes around the venue. The movement then reprises the haunting first movement theme, capturing the light as it magically illuminates the stained-glass window once again.

Auckland-based organist Michael Bell joined Kevin for the recital, featuring solo works from each musician as well as a program of organ and accordion duets, including another world premiere of New Zealand composer Gary Daverne’s Song of the Far North for organ and accordion. The duo was joined by fellow musicians from the North Shore Accordion Orchestra (Auckland), as well as Lionel Reekie (accordionist, vocals, and glockenspiel), Joan Emmett Brown (bass accordion and glockenspiel), and Linda Emmett Litt (timpani). Joan and Linda are the daughters of Kevin’s original accordion teachers, Ben and Doreen Emmett. They performed on the historical Emmett family

instruments housed at the Dargaville Museum, including Ben Emmett’s bass accordion and his two handmade timpani. The concert also featured works by Bach, Hine, Zolotaryov, Mozart, John Williams, Venglevski, Macky, Daverne, Piazzolla, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Handel, and Lithgow.

The organ and accordion program was also presented in Auckland, New Zealand on June 4, 2023 as part of the New Zealand Accordion Association (NZAA) annual festival final concert.

“Dargaville Impressions” will have its American debut next year during an ATG festival concert to be held in Kansas City July 23-27, 2024.



## Accordion Pops Orchestra in Concert

The Accordion Pops Orchestra, conducted by Al Terzo performed on May 20, 2023 in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the South Presbyterian Church in Bergenfield, NJ.

The orchestra's roots can be traced to 1970 when it was organized by the Accordion Teachers Association of New Jersey. Its first conductor was Dr. Jacob Neupauer of Philadelphia. In 1980, the orchestra was reorganized under well-known accordionist and composer Eugene Ettore. In 1985, the orchestra was again reorganized under Daniel Desiderio and the name was formally changed to the Accordion Pops Orchestra. The membership was expanded beyond the original members from New Jersey to include performers from Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Delaware, Maryland, and Rhode Island. Maestro Desiderio retired in 2011 and turned the reins over to the current conductor, Al Terzo.

The orchestra consists entirely of accordions plus percussion instruments. The accordions are divided into five main sections (first through fifth accordion), each playing different parts. In addition, there is a bass accordion with special deep reeds and a MIDI accordion with electronic capabilities to simulate hundreds of other instruments. The roughly 30 members include professionals, teachers, and amateur musicians. The

orchestra performs a repertoire taken from a wide range of music categories, including Broadway, popular music, movie themes, and light classical compositions. The orchestra performs in concert halls, festivals, playhouses, clubs, churches, and retirement homes.

Conductor Al Terzo is a music teacher, arranger, and conductor. He has been a member of the orchestra since its inception in 1970. Mr. Terzo is a member of the Music Teachers National Association, the New Jersey Music Teachers Association, and the National Association of Music Educators. He is a member of the governing board of the American Accordionists' Association and a founding member of the Mid Atlantic Music Teachers Guild. He has performed at the Garden State Arts Center and Newark Symphony Hall, and currently teaches accordion and piano in New Jersey.

Al shares, "Referring to our new website, several orchestras from around the world have asked for some of our arrangements listed on the repertoire link. Groups from the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Belgium, South Korea, and Malta."

For further information, please email [webmaster@accordionpops.com](mailto:webmaster@accordionpops.com).



## CIA Winter Congress in Paks, Hungary

The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) held their 149th General Assembly of Delegates Winter Congress in Paks, Hungary, March 3-5, 2023. The Winter Congress attended by delegates from 17 countries from as far afield as the USA, South Korea, Russia, Scandinavia, and throughout Europe was hosted by the CIA Voting Member "Az Ifjú Harmonikásokért" Alapítvány - "For the Young Accordionists" Foundation, Olga Papp - President. Representing the United States CIA members, the American Accordionists' Association (AAA) and the Accordionists and Teachers Guild International (ATG), was delegate Kevin Friedrich, who serves on the Board of Directors of both organizations.



The opening event of the General Assembly was a concert in the beautiful Lutheran Church of Paks by accordionist Marcell Csuka and the Mixed Choir of Paks. Marcell performed works ranging from Scarlatti and Rameau to the contemporary composers Berio, Cage, and Sciarrino. A graduate of the Bela Bartok Vocational School of Music in Budapest and the Stain Petersburg Conservatory Rimsky Korsakov in Russia, Marcell specializes in promoting modern works and the accordion, and performs with numerous contemporary chamber ensembles.

After meetings of the CIA Executive and Music Committees, at the opening session of the 149th General Assembly, President Mirco Patarini (Italy) welcomed delegates in his opening address. Reports were given by other executive officers, including Kimmo Mattila (Finland – General Secretary), Alexander Selivanov (Russia – Chairman of the Music Committee), Kevin Friedrich (USA – Ambassador), Harley Jones (New Zealand – Public Relations Manager (presented on his behalf by Kevin Friedrich), and the co-host organizer Sergei Krickij (Hungary – For the Young Accordionists" Foundation). An additional report was presented by Anica Karakutovska of the Ljubitelji na Klasicnata Muzika in Skopje in North Macedonia, who highlighted an upcoming premiere by composer Bete Ilin and their 15th anniversary celebrating CIA World Accordion Day.

The General Assembly was an opportunity for the CIA to work over matters including financial matters, future

events, membership affairs, the September 2023 Coupe Mondiale, technical issues pertaining to the contestants, jury, and delegates, Merit and Honored Friend of the Accordion Awards, and other agenda items.

The CIA unanimously welcomed the renowned group from Moldova, Concertino as a new voting member. Artistic Manager Eugen Negruța and member Sergei Paramonov Mirzac were in attendance to present their application and receive their subsequent membership.

Concertino represents a group of accordionists, founded on October 18, 2003, whose purpose is to promote the accordion as an instrument for several musical styles. The concept of Concertino belongs to fresh-faced graduate musicians from Music Theatre and Fine Arts Academy, who had the ambition to invest all their musical knowledge into a unique and original project. They proved to the world that the accordion is an instrument that allows the skilled interpreter to perform not only popular, but also classical music. Besides the characteristic energy and stamina, Concertino can be proud of having a repertoire that embraces creations from classical, contemporary, folk music, and jazz, collaborating with different composers from the country and abroad. Since 2017, Concertino Accordion Band was taken under the protection of prestigious National Philharmonic "Serghei Lunchevici."

The CIA had received two nominations for their prestigious CIA Merit Award, in honor of outstanding contributions to the international accordion movement. The Congress voted to unanimously accept Ladislav Horák (Czech Republic) and Renzo Ruggieri (Italy) for the awards. There were no nominations for the Honored Friend of the Accordion Award for this assembly.

The hosts provided an additional concert by Ádám Pataki and his variety band, performing works by Bartók, Közeledő, Chernikov, Vlasov, Hermosa, and Piazzolla, followed by a trip to the Fritz Estate vineyard. The Fritz Estate, was one of dozens of homesteads in the Decsi vineyard a few decades ago. From the early days of only two hectares of vineyards, the estate has grown more than 15 times, allowing the family to revive the centuries-old family winemaking traditions dating back as far as 1635. The delegates were treated to a gala evening of wine tasting, a grand dinner, and traditional Hungarian music.

The event concluded with the closing session of the General Assembly and a farewell luncheon at the Szedmák Maestro Pince-Borház vineyard.

For more on the CIA, visit [www.accordions.com/cia](http://www.accordions.com/cia).

## The UMKC Community Accordion Ensemble in Concert

The University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Community Accordion Ensemble directed by Joan Cochran Sommers performed two concerts in June 2023 as follows: June 24 at the Swan Dive Events Centre in Independence, MO and on June 25 at the Kansas City United Church of Christ Social Hall in Kansas City, MO.

Most of the players of The UMKC Community Accordion Ensemble 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 has remained devoted to promoting the accordion and its varied repertoire, including transcriptions, commissions, and other original works.



Over the last years, they have performed in San Francisco, Kansas City, the 80th Anniversary Festival of the American Accordionists' Association (AAA) in Alexandria, VA, Superior, WI at A World of Accordions Museum, and at the recent 80th Anniversary celebration of the Accordionists and Teachers Guild (ATG) in Lisle, IL. In addition, they have participated in the USA contributions to World Accordion Day events, when videos of their performances were broadcast during the live presentations.

Director Joan C. Sommers has held numerous positions in several music organizations, including the ATG and the Confédération Internationale des Accordionistes (CIA – IMC-UNESCO), where she was recently awarded lifetime honorary membership. Joan C. Sommers was awarded the title of Professor Emerita upon her retirement from the UMKC Conservatory of Music, where she established and taught the accordion degree program for 40 years. She has arranged innumerable works for both accordion orchestra and chamber ensemble over many years, works that have been performed around the globe.



Today, she enjoys performing with fellow accordionists in duo, with other instrumentalists, with the UMKC Community Accordion Ensemble, and as guest conductor with various orchestras around the world, including founding and leading the magnificent World Accordion Orchestra in many countries.

The 2023 UMKC Community Accordion Ensemble players are: Back Row: Ron Barrow, Kevin Friedrich, Mary Ann Covone, Ron Dake, Kenn Baert; Front Row: Sherry Carroll, Betty Jo Simon, Joan C. Sommers, Jane Christison, and Samantha Wagner.

## Stas Venglevski Presents his Fifteen Minutes of Fame

On June 4, 2023, accordionist Stas Venglevski took part in the interesting and popular “Fifteen Minutes of Fame” series, where he gave world premiere performances of works by fifteen different composers from around the world who have composed one minute selections for the online organization.

“Fifteen Minutes of Fame” is 15 one-minute works written for a specific performer or ensemble, giving a variety of living composers’ new music to audiences hungry to hear what is being created today.

Seth Gilman, NY Music Culture Examiner, writes, “The Fifteen Minutes of Fame project of Vox Novus is a godsend. It organizes competitions whereby ensembles (artists) commission worldwide calls for submissions of approximately one-minute pieces and then select their 15 favorites for premieres. The players, themselves emerging and without the funds for a traditional commission fee, get original works to present, while the likewise emerging composers get a chance for exposure and a premiere.”

“Fifteen Minutes of Fame” was designed by producer and composer Robert Voisey to create an opportunity for composers to get their works performed and heard by global audiences. The presentation of 15 works in a short amount of time allows for the performance of works from composers who would not normally get programmed on a chamber concert. More than 600 composers have been chosen to have their works premiered. The composers selected are from more than 30 countries around the world. Their compositional style and aesthetic are as diverse as the different cultures they represent.

Stas presented new works by composers: Michalis Andronikou, David Bohn, Stephen de Filippo, John

Kefala Kerr, Chihchun Chi-sun Lee, Rosita Piritore, Ryan Charles Ramer, Cornelia Schmid, David Unger, Robert Voisey, Anna Vriend, Willyn Whiting, Matthew Williamson, Yehuda Yannay, and Yuriy Zhikrivetskiy.

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 Friedrich Lips, Stas immigrated to the United States in 1992. An accordionist, arranger, entertainer, and 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 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 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 15 acclaimed albums 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.

The 15 performances, including an introduction and interview with each of the composers, is available at: <https://youtu.be/6JP6QjrhkOc>



## Dee Langley with the Pavia Wind Quintet



On June 3, 2023, accordionist Dee Langley performed with the Pavia Wind Quintet on their Summer Recital.

The Pavia Wind Quintet performed arrangements of Grainger's Lincolnshire Posy, Ravel's Le Tombeau de Couperin, Drones & Nanorhythms by Nikola Resanovic and Hot Air by Joshua Mitchell with Dee Langley. Pavia Wind Quintet members include: Ryan Golden (clarinet), Justin Windschitl (bassoon), Gina Goettl, (French horn), Lindsey Thompson (oboe), and Erica Bennett Duggan (flute).

Accordionist Dee Langley specializes in both solo and ensemble works for the accordion, having appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Guthrie Theater, Duluth Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Sinfonia, Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra, Nautilus Music Theater, Ethnic Dance Theatre, Dolina Polish Folk Dancers, and Theater Latte Da.

Dee is the winner of the 2012 Minnesota Emerging Composer Award (Orkestar Bez Ime - World Music) and the 2011-2012 McKnight Fellowship for Performing Musicians. In 2019, Dee was honored at the American Accordion Musicological Society for her lifelong dedication and service to the accordion as a performer, educator, director, and composer. She was inducted into the American Accordion Hall of Fame in 2020.

Founder and coordinator for the NE Accordion Festival, Dee is also a former president of the Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG), and currently teaches accordion for Minneapolis College as well as privately in NE Minneapolis.



## 2,525-piece Accordion Orchestra in Tacheng, China

The 2023 Xin Jiang Tacheng Accordion Art Festival was held August 18-20, 2023 in Tacheng, China. The China Daily Times (English edition) wrote: "Dubbed as the ‘city of accordion,’ Tacheng has a rich history and legacy of accordion. The accordion is akin to a symbol of the city.

Many events were held during the 3-day festival, including the ‘Belt and Road’ Tacheng International Accordion Development Forum, which was an opportunity for attendees to hear from several invited guests sharing information about the accordion, its development, and other activities in various countries.

Moderated by Crystal Wang, Secretary of the Chinese Accordion Association and international interpreter, panelists included Kevin Friedrich (speaking on early accordion development and projects in New Zealand), Grayson Masfield (speaking on recent activities and goals for the future in New Zealand), Mirco Patarini (speaking on the development of the accordion in Italy), Kimmo Mattila (speaking on the accordion in Finland), Harley Jones (speaking on international perspectives) and Li Cong (speaking on activities relating to China).



An exciting part of the festival was the establishment of the Guinness World Record for the largest accordion orchestra. AAA Board member Kevin Friedrich has taken part in the three Guinness record events in China, including in 2016 when Tacheng gained the record when it presented 1,517 players in concert. The record was broken soon thereafter in 2017 in Shenzhen, China, when organizers managed to assemble 2,260 players. The challenge was then back on for Tacheng to take back the record, which they successfully achieved when Guinness officials verified 2,525 players participated in the performance. An additional 2,003 participated online with their participation broadcast live on the jumbo screens adorning the stage, making a combined total of 4,528 players performing at the same time.



Five countries and 10 cities were represented in the event. During the performance, officials were stationed approximately one per 50 players to verify that each person in their section is playing throughout the piece. At the conclusion of the performance, each official reports back to the main headquarters to verify the count in their section and confirm that each person has contributed to the record-breaking event.

CIA members Kimmo Mattila (General Secretary), Grayson Masfield (Music Committee Vice Chair), Mirco Patarini (President), and Kevin Friedrich (Ambassador) took part in the Guinness World Record event.