



Newsletter



SEPTEMBER 28, 2014

*Celebrating the
Music of the Valtaro
Guest Frank Toscano
Riccardo's by the Bridge
21-01 24th Avenue
Astoria (Queens), NY
12 noon to 5 pm
Dinner and Dancing
Featuring music by
Dominic Karcic & Ray Oreggia
Emilio Magnotta
Eddie Monteiro
Frank Carozza
and the honoree himself,
Frank Toscano
Others to be announced.*

From the Editor

Welcome to the September 2014 edition of the AAA Newsletter providing a cross section of member and industry news from across the country.

As the summer comes to a close, we can proudly reflect on the wonderful activities of the AAA, including the recent festival in Tarrytown and the 20th Anniversary Master Class and Concert series in New York.

For those of you who are not able to attend the upcoming Coupe Mondiale in Salzburg, we invite you to visit www.coupemondiale.org during the time-frame of the festival October 27- November 2, 2014 to follow along online as activities will be streamed or instant replayed during the event. It will also afford you the opportunity to support our two AAA contestants Naomi Harris and Nathan Chapeton, as well as see the magnificent finale to World Accordion Orchestra as Joan Sommers retires from her official role at the CIA.

Once again my sincere thanks to the AAA President Linda Reed, Board of Director's member, Rita Davidson and all those that have been able to contribute news items for helping make this newsletter possible.

Items for the November Newsletter can be sent to me at goaccordion@yahoo.com or to the AAA e-mail address at: ameraccord1938@gmail.com Please include "AAA Newsletter" in the subject box, so that we don't miss any items that come in. Text should be sent within the e-mail or as a Word attachment. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg 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 November Newsletter will be October 15, 2014.

I look forward to hearing from you with your news for the upcoming November edition soon!



Naomi Harris & Nathan Chapeton Qualified for Coupe Mondiale in Salzburg

Two young accordionists qualified for their categories at the upcoming 2014 Coupe Mondiale in Salzburg, Austria, while competing at the AAA Festival in Tarrytown.

14-year-old Naomi Harris from Spokane, Washington, previous winner of the 2014 Leavenworth Competition and Nathan Chapeton, winner of the 2014 AAA Virtuoso Category, qualified to represent the USA at the 67th Coupe Mondiale to be held in Salzburg, Austria from October 27-November 2, 2014.

Naomi Harris previously won 1st place in the Leavenworth Open Competition and competed in the Junior International Competition for Virtuoso Entertainment Music at the Coupe Mondiale festival held in Victoria, BC last year. Naomi loves both facets of the accordion and enjoys playing pop and novelty songs with her accordion band, but also loves to play the deeply passionate music for which the accordion is especially suited. Her teacher is Patricia Bartell, widely known as an adjudicator, professional performer, a member of Tango Vocaldo and leads the young accordion band, The Portatos.

Thirteen-year-old Nathan Chapeton studies accordion with American Accordionists' Association (AAA) Board Member and well-known



concert accordionist, Mary Tokarski. This will be Nathan's first international competition. He also plays the guitar and loves entertaining, playing at local events and regularly participates at church events with his accordion. His plans for the future definitely include music and the accordion. He hopes to apprentice in Italy to become involved with accordion construction and repair, and desires to have an integral part of the accordion's future here in the U.S.A.

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Coupe Mondiale 2014 – Jr. Virtuoso Entertainment

During the timeframe of the Coupe Mondiale, we invite you to visit www.coupemondiale.org then follow the links to the Salzburg Coupe Mondiale and the Daily Report links to watch their performances, as well as other events via the live streaming and instant replay options.

We wish Naomi and Nathan great success as they represent the USA in the prestigious CIA competition! ■

Hallmark Card Winner Stephanie Jamiolkowski

Hallmark Cards, a world renowned greeting card company based in Kansas City, recently ran a design competition with one of the winning cards featuring the accordion, designed by Stephanie Jamiolkowski. The cover of her birthday card reads *'This is all going accordion to my plan...'*

Stephanie is of Polish and Slovak heritage, and she and her family love polkas and the accordion. The love apparently extends to her cat, Gnocchi who is pictured on the birthday greeting card with the accordion! ■



Faithe Deffner Memorials in New York and California

Faithe Deffner, a well known entity in the accordion world both nationally and internationally who passed away at her residence in Florida on June 3, 2014, was honored in celebrations of her life which were held from coast to coast.



"A Celebration of the Life of Faithe Deffner" was hosted by Faithe's lifelong friend, Angelica Bargou, on Sunday, July 13 at the Double Tree by Hilton, Tarrytown, New York, at the conclusion of the annual American Accordionists' Association (AAA) competition and festival. A former President of the AAA and recipient of their Lifetime Achievement Award, Faithe held the title President Emerita at the AAA.

Soon afterwards, the Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG) dedicated their Friday Gala Concert in Faithe's honor, paying tribute to her years of service to the organization as an Executive Officer, Contest organizer and promoter. Faithe was inducted into the ATG Hall of Fame in 2007, and was recently appointed as the ATG's first Board Member Emeritus.

A highlight of the celebrations in New York and California included an extensive audio visual presentation of Faithe's life prepared by Dan and Joan Grauman, with the music provided by New Zealand accordionist and lifelong friend of Faithe, Harley Jones.

More recently Faithe's daughter and son-in-law Verne and Ronnie Uvezian, have been very proactive in ensuring Faithe's business related and historical materials, which span 80 years of the accordion industry, have been donated to A World of Accordions Museum, where both Titano and Pancordion Accordions and Ernest and Faithe Deffner permanent exhibitions are being put together. Fittingly, the exhibitions will be housed adjacent to the current American Accordionist's Association exhibition at the Museum.

At the New York memorial, several people shared memories of events and private moments including Dr. Helmi Harrington, Joan Grauman, Linda Soley Reed, Frank Busso, Sr., Sam Falcetti, Mary Archuleta, Dr. William Schimmel, Kevn Friedrich and An Bargou. Pictured (below) are Joanna and Stanley Darrow, Helmi Harrington, Ph. D., Julie Cardona, Joan Grauman, Dr. William Schimmel, Rita Barnea, Frank Busso, Dr. Robert Young McMahan and Kevin Friedrich; Sam and Peggy Falcetti with Mary Tokarski; Linda Reed and Rita Barnea. A musical tribute was presented by the Busso family including grandson, Alexander Lammers (pictured below), Frank Busso, Jr. and Frank Busso. Links to the memorial video, as well as the official obituary prepared by Helmi Harrington, Ph.D. can be found at www.accordions.com/fdeffner ■

Joey Miskulin's New CD "The Other Side of the Fence"

Grammy Award winning Hall of Fame member accordionist Joey Miskulin has appeared on over 400 record albums with the likes of Johnny Cash, Paul McCartney, Andy Williams, U2, Garth Brooks, Shania Twain, Frankie Yankovic, Alison Krause, and many more.

In his new CD, "The Other Side of the Fence," Joey returns to his Chicago roots with a jazz based recording of popular standards.

Tracks on the new CD include: *Avalon, Here's That Rainy Day, I'm so Lonesome I Could Cry, Basin Street Blues, Our Love Is Here to Stay, A Day in the Life of a Fool, Stardust, On Green Dolphin Street, It's Almost Like Being in Love, La Vie En Rose, Secret Love*



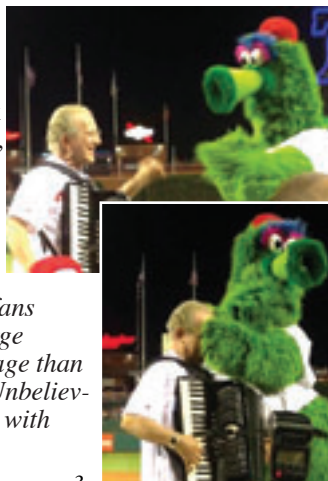
"The Other Side of the Fence" is available on CD from various online sites such as Amazon and CD Baby. ■

Joe Soprani in Concert

Joe Soprani recently presented several concerts including at a Phillies game at Citizens Band Park with the Phillie Phanatic on July 21, 2014 during the seventh inning stretch celebrating Italian Heritage Night. This was Joe's third appearance with the Phillie Phanatic.

Joe said, "It is always lots of fun for me to see the reaction from the fans when he covers my face with his large 'paw.' This always gets more coverage than anything I've done over the years. Unbelievable! I have been invited to appear with him again next year, God willing."

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Joe Soprani in Concert

On July 16, Joe performed at the Washington Monument concert with the US Air Force Band in Washington DC. It was in celebration of "An Italian Salute - Bella Notte" and was conducted by Captain David Alpar, assistant conductor of the band.

Joe was the featured guest soloist and premiered the "Italian Rhapsody" by Julie Giroux with the 80 piece concert band. In addition to the solos, he accompanied the Singing Sergeants in "Italian Street Song" and "Finiculi-Finicula" with the concert band.

Joe said, "Col. Arnold Gabriel, who for over 21 years was the commander of the band, was guest conductor. I'm sure many of you know that I was the accordion soloist many years ago under Col. George S. Howard. My four years with the band really set the tone, no pun intended, for my entire career. What a great way to finish out my career. The Band facilities at Bolling field are state-of-the-art. You have to see it to believe the beauty of the facilities. The men and women of the Air Force are some of the finest musi-



U.S. Air Force Band
Joe Soprani, Soloist

cians in the country. It was a thrill for me to be a part of the program. Check out the US Air Force Band on the Internet."

For further information: joesoprani@gmail.com ■

N.B. AAA Board member, Frank Busso, Jr., is the accordionist with the United States Air Force Strolling Strings.

Accordion Virtuosi of Russia in Rare US Performances

On October 30, 2014 renowned Russian accordion orchestra "Accordion Virtuosi of Russia" will appear in Hazleton, PA as part of their concert series, and then this dynamic and world class group will appear at the University of Michigan's UMS Global Music: The Big Squeeze: An Accordion Summit.

Hosted by UMS Global Music, at the summit, the accordion will take center stage showcasing a broad spectrum of performance and compositional styles and sounds that contribute to the accordion's virtually ubiquitous position throughout global music. Representing the accordion on a grand scale, the Accordion Virtuosi of Russia will be performing popular and Russian classical music arrangements.

The group Accordion Virtuosi of Russia was founded in 1943 during the Leningrad siege by Professor Pavel Smirnov. Within only six months, the ensemble was invited to record on the state radio. Since its inception, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has been led by three generations of the Smirnov family: firstly by its founder Pavel Smirnov, and now by his sons Yuri and Vladimir, as well as his grandson Yaroslav.

Throughout its history, Accordion Virtuosi of Russia has performed at some of the most prestigious venues in the world including the Gewandhaus, Verona's Arena, Olympia Hall in Paris, and the Great Philharmonic Hall in St. Petersburg. They have toured extensively in Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Spain, Japan, Guinea, Angola, Sierra Leon, Congo, Japan, Canada and elsewhere. They are also winners of numerous awards. Most

recently, the Accordion Virutosi of Russia has been included in the prestigious "Golden Book of St. Petersburg."

This outstanding ensemble was invited to be a part of the cultural program for the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, Montreal in 1976, and Moscow in 1980 and the ensemble's repertoire ranges from folk music to arrangements of rock songs and continues to astound audiences around the world.

"...these Russians are true musicians and they played with brilliance."

Rheinische Post, Germany

"...it was a pleasant surprise to hear accordions played like that!"

Kouvolan Sanomat, Finland

"They perform with incredible precision and unbelievable delicacy."

Frankfurter Neue Presse, Germany

Also appearing at the Michigan event will be Julien Labro (of Hot Club of Detroit) who forms a unique collaboration with Chicago's contemporary classical Spektral Quartet, presenting rarely performed works on the bandoneon and accordina (sister instruments of the accordion) by Villa-Lobos, Piazzolla, and Nuevo Tango composer Diego Schissi, as well as CIA World Champion Alexander Sevastian.



Accordion Virtuosi
of Russia

For the PA concert, general admission tickets (purchased at the door) are available for \$30 for Adults, \$10 for Students and College Students with appropriate ID. The concert will be at 7:30 PM at the Hazleton Area High School, 1601 W. 23rd Street in Hazleton, PA. For more information, please contact: info@hazletonconcert-series.org. The University of Michigan event will be held on Saturday, November 1, 2014 at 8:00 p.m. at Hill Auditorium on the UM campus, located at 825 N. University Ave. in Ann Arbor. ■

Anthony Galla-Rini 'Collectors' Edition' CD Available

A founding member of the AAA, the late Anthony Galla-Rini's music has been preserved on CD. The Anthony Galla-Rini 'Collectors' Edition' CD includes such numbers as *Begin the Beguine*, *Yesterday*, *Italian Medley*, *Speak Softly*, *Torna A Surriento*, *That Old Black Magic*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Accordion Concerto in G Minor*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *Lara's Theme*, *Fascination*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and more.



This release includes tracks from Galla-Rini's last studio session, with half the tracks being solo recordings whilst the other half are from Galla-Rini's 1967 Accordion Symphonette Orchestra album.

Anthony Galla-Rini (1904-2006) had an extraordinarily long and successful career as a professional accordionist, composer and teacher. He was one of the first in the USA to pioneer the accordion as a concert instrument performing classical music. He is considered by many to be the first American accordionist to promote the accordion as a legitimate concert instrument.

Anthony Galla-Rini arranged hundreds of transcriptions for accordion ensembles, orchestras and soloists, and also played a major part in pioneering the development of the modern accordion, developing the treble and bass registers, as well as standardizing the stradella bass system on the accordion.

In 1975, the President of Italy conferred on him the title of "*Cavalier of the Star of Solidarity*" in recognition of his efforts towards strengthening the cultural bonds between Italian and American people and for his interest in the development of the Italian accordion in America. Galla-Rini, a founding member of the AAA was also President Emeritus of the ATG, and the first person to be inducted in their Hall of Fame on his 99th birthday in 2003.

In 1976, he composed "*Accordion Concerto No. 2 in E minor*" (in three movements) for the free-bass system. And in 1983 he composed "*Sonata in D minor*" for accordion (also in three movements). The career of Anthony Galla-Rini spanned 98 years as a professional accordionist, and more than 74 years as an accordion teacher.

For information about purchasing the CD, please e-mail: petosa@petosa.com ■

20th Anniversary of the Master Class and Concert Series

Celebrated accordionist Dr. William Schimmel presented his 20th Annual series of the popular Master Class and Concert Series in New York City. Under the auspices of the American Accordionists' Association (AAA), 'The Seminars' were held August 1-3, 2014 at The Tenri Cultural Institute in New York.

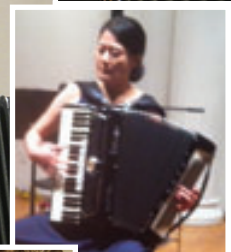
This year's event titled "The Everyday Accordion: Ordinary x Proper = Radiant," was well attended with many commenting that despite every year being outstanding, that this 20th Anniversary Celebration was the best yet.

Moderated by Dr. William Schimmel the three day event offered listeners an interactive series of Master Classes and eclectic variety of performances on the evening concerts.

The distinguished participants this year included Micki Goodman, Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Paul Stein, Godfrey Nelson, Lorraine Nelson Wolf, Rita Barnea, Will Holshouser, Ken Laufer, Lee Mc Clure, Kathleen Tipton, Mayumi Miyaoka, Doug Makofka, Bob Goldberg, Melissa Elledge, Mark Nathanson, Art Bailey, Mary Spencer Knapp, Erica Marie Mancini, Benjamin Ickies, Corn Mo, John Foti, Rachid Eladlouni, Rachel Swaner, David First, David Stoler, Brian Dewan, Dr. Hugo Goldenzweig, Dr. Rocco Jerry, Dave Soldier, Milica Paranosic, Dan Cooper, Noah Creshevsky, Demetrius Spaneas, Peter Jarvis, Tomoka Sugawara, Yoichi Fukui, Michael Dames, Linda Reed, Dragica Banic-Curcic, Peter Flint, Ingrid Kvale, Marni Rice, Genevieve Leloup, Bjorn Skjelbred, Carl Riehl, Ralph Crispino and the curator, Dr. William Schimmel.

Presenting a magnificent variety of performances, Saturday's concert was no exception. Among the featured pieces were *Toys in Brown Paper Packages* by Paul Stein and Dr. Schimmel, *Die Winterreise* by Schubert performed by Corn Mo (vocals) and Dr. Schimmel, *Sonatina in C* by Carmelo Pino performed by Peter Flint, *Fromage Dandereux* and *Concerto Bullo* by William Schimmel performed by Mayumi Miyaoka and Erica Marie Mancini respectively, *Acco Music* an ATG commissioned work by Ernst Krenek performed by Dr. Robert McMahan, *The Long Walk* composed and performed by Marni Rice, *Uriah The Dead (Tango for One)* performed by Dr. Schimmel, *Pirate Jenny*, *Jonny*, *Wenn Du Geburtstag Hast* and *Radio* performed by Kim Smith (vocals) and Benjamin Ickies, *Seantic Josephine* by Schimmel, performed by Dr. Schimmel (voice and melodica), *Sweet Jane* performed by Doug Makofka, *Rich Kids Medley* composed and performed by John Foti, *Pleinair #3* by Carl Riehl performed by Carl Riehl, Bob Goldberg, Benjamin Ickies and Doug Makofka, *Dazed and Confused* performed by Dr. Schimmel with Guitar, vocals, piano and cello, with the concert concluding with *Forever Young* performed by John Foti and Dr. Schimmel.

For information on next year's 21st Anniversary event, please visit www.ameracord.com where the information will be published as it becomes available. ■



Pictured above Dr. William Schimmel, Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Mayumi Miyaoka, Ben Ickies, Kim Smith, Corn Mo, AAA President Linda Reed with Dr. Schimmel



Michigan Accordion Society Promotes the Accordion to Youngsters

Michigan Accordion Society President, Joe Recchia, recently drove to meet MAS member, Gene Van, to pick up a carload of 12 bass accordions which will be used to kick off the new MAS Accordion for Kids program.

The accordions will be provided free of charge to students. Organization of this program is currently underway. The accordions were provided by Gene Van and also purchased, in part, by the Tony Dannon Scholarship Fund, which is managed by the Michigan Accordion Society. (MAS).

Bill Palmer, Jr., who is a MAS member, is donating the Palmer-Hughes beginner books and 24 students have already received accordion tuition scholarships.

The Michigan Accordion Society awarded \$2,700.00 in music scholarship to music students at their monthly music event on Tuesday June 17, 2014 at the Forestre Banquet Center in Rochester Hills, Michigan in front of a packed audience.

The evening was wonderful, as many students participated by playing a variety of instruments including accordions, guitar, trumpet, piano and voice. Students ranged in age from 7 to 22. Tri-County Music Studios that participated in the program were Evola Music, Shelby Township, Gus Zoppi Music Center, Troy, EDB Studios, Warren and The Music Authority School, Dearborn as well as private Instructors, Bob George & Yakov Todromovich.

"The Event was a big success and we are very pleased that the scholarship money was paid out directly to the student's teachers so that the money will be used for future music lessons for these talented kids," said Joe Recchia, MAS President.

Recchia also mentioned that "as a 501c3 tax deductible non-profit Music Society, we have been awarded significant funding from

families in our community that have lost loved ones and in lieu of flowers they wanted memorial funds to be set up so that these funds can be used to promote accordions and music education programs for local area children. The proceeds that were paid out came from the Ray Battani, Jerry May and Tony Dannon Memorial Scholarship Funds that the Michigan Accordion Society manages. This is a win/win for both the families of the deceased and the music students in our community."

The funds that were awarded were only the beginning as the MAS also unveiled a brand new "Accordion for Kids Program" and has already signed up several students immediately after the announcement. The program is great because MAS will supply the instrument and music educational books. Then the student's family is provided with several MAS accordion teachers that they can choose from.

The student is then off to the races learning the instrument and all that is asked in return is the student's commitment to learn the instrument.

"We have seen a very interesting resurgence in folks wanting to be around accordionists and that is great for not only the instrument but for the music students in our community as well. It's something great for the students to do that will keep their mind sharp and stay out of trouble" said Recchia.

MAS was founded in 1996 and has grown from a small handful of members to nearly 280 members today.

"The key to our success has been building a positive, enthusiastic and visionary membership base along with embracing the right people that want to see the instrument and music benefit our community in positive ways" said Recchia.

For further information: jrecchia@comcast.net ■

LIAA Celebrates 4th Anniversary

The Long Island Accordion Alliance celebrated its 4th Anniversary on Wednesday, August 6, 2014, an event featuring dinner and music of featured guest artists, vocalist Cheryl Spielman and accordionist Dominic Karcic.

Dominic founded the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) in August 2010. The widespread success of LIAA events has endeared it to accordionists and accordion music lovers from all over the New York Metro area and has made it (LIAA) and its events the "voice of the accordion on Long Island."

Originally from Astoria, NY, Dominic Karcic has lived in Com-mack, Long Island for the last forty-two years and has played accordion and piano professionally in the New York metropolitan area and continues to do so today. Some of the venues/patrons for whom

he and his musicians, "The Continental Sound," have performed include the Columbus Citizens Foundation (NYC), the Valtarese Foundation (Parma, Italy), Fubinese Society (Piemonte, Italy), Italian Charities of Queens, NY, Society for Italian Culture of Long Island, Italian Heritage Association of Long Island and also Magnanini Winery in Wallkill, NY.

His love for the Valtaro Musette music was instilled in him through his years of study with noted accordionist Peter Spagnoli. In recent years he has been involved in the preservation and documentation of this musical style.

He collaborated in writing a biographical article on the life and career of accordionist, John "Scudlein" Brugnoli (founder of the Valtaro Musette Orchestra), which was published in the *Gazzetta di*



Accordion participants in the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) Fourth Anniversary Celebration Wednesday, August 6, 2014. Back row left to right: Gregory Zukoff, Frank Scardino, John Perno, Joe DeClemente, Joe Campo, Huntington Town Supervisor, Frank P. Petrone, Dominic Karcic. Front row left to right: Phil Franzese, Santo Endrizzi, Phil Prete, Fr. Ed Buchheit, Bob LaBua and Ray Oreggia.

Parma (Parma, Italy) on September 10, 2002. This article was the basis in 2008 for an extended work (*Tutti Mi Chiamano Bionda*) on accordionists from the *Emilia-Romagna* by columnist Caludio Bacilleri (Bologna, Italy) who writes for ER Magazine (*Emilia-Romagna Magazine*). Several of Dominic's articles about Valtaro Musette music were also published on the *Borgo Val di Taro* web-site in August and September of 2005.

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LIAA 4th Anniversary, cont'd. from page 5

In June of 2003, Dominic joined the Board of Directors of the American Accordionists' Association (AAA) and contributes articles for the AAA Newsletter. He and fellow accordionist, Ray Oreggia, have given workshop presentations on the Valtaro Musette style for the American Accordionists' Association (AAA), Connecticut Accordion Association (CAA), Maryland Accordion Club, the Washington Metropolitan Accordion Society (WMAS) and the Istria Women's Club (Astoria, NY).

The Long Island Accordion Alliance holds monthly meetings. All are welcome to listen or participate with accordions. The atmosphere is accepting and entertaining.

Huntington, NY Town Supervisor, Frank P. Petrone, whose father was an accordionist and band leader, attended the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) Fourth Anniversary Celebration.

The meeting of the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA) sponsored by La Villini Restaurant was on Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2014 - 6 PM where featured guest artists included accordionist, Manny Corallo, accompanied by Tony Drago. For further information, please contact Dominic at: dkarcic10@verizon.net ■

Valtaro Celebration - September 28th Honoring Frank Toscano

Non-stop music for your listening and dancing pleasure – this is one event you won't want to miss.

Performers include Dominic Karcic and Ray Oreggia, Emilio Magnotta, Frank Carozza, Eddie Monteiro and the honoree himself, Frank Toscano, plus a few surprise guest artists!

See the details included in this newsletter - Reservations are due by September 15th.

The afternoon will start with Riccardo's elaborate cocktail hour consisting of:

- BBQ Ribs
- Italian Sausage & Peppers
- Fried Calamari
- Meatballs in Sauce
- Baked Ziti
- Pernil al Horno
- Chicken & Spanish Rice
- Fresh Garden
- Vegetable Crudite and
- Assorted Cheese Platter

and your dinner choice of

- Prime Rib
- Chicken Francese
- or
- Broiled Salmon

Open Bar all afternoon



Weird Al No. 1 Album and Petition Launched for Super Bowl Show

Fans of accordion playing, singing funny-man "Weird Al" Yankovic have launched a petition calling for the parody singer/accordionist to perform at next year's Super Bowl.

Just weeks after "Weird Al" landed his first number one album in his three decade career, the petition is attempting to influence the NFL's Super Bowl Halftime entertainment choice. The Change.org initiative, (to find the petition, simply put 'yankovic' in the search field) created by Ed Ball, has collected over 125,000 signatures thus far.

Ball writes, "For decades Weird Al has entertained fans, young and old, with his popular clever parodies and unique sense of humor. Having him headline the Super Bowl XLIX Halftime Show would not only be overly accepted by the millions of viewers, but it would remain true to the standards and quality of the show business we have come to love and respect out of this prestigious event." Sounds like just the man to headline sports' biggest event!

Excerpts from: Review of "Weird Al's" latest pop music release "Mandatory Fun" by David Hiltbrand which featured the heading: 35 years after his recording debut, "Weird Al" Yankovic is bigger and brassier than ever.

"An accordion-playing song parodist? Not a formula for career longevity. But here's "Weird Al" Yankovic, 35 years after his recording debut, bigger and brassier than ever. "Weird Al" hasn't changed his approach one bit with the chart-topping "Mandatory Fun."

"He goes after pop's big fish (in this case, Lorde, Pharrell, Iggy Azalea). The backing tracks are cheesy but instantly recognizable, and the mock lyrics are clever and cohesive. The album includes an accordion medley that covers everyone from Carly Rae to Pitbull. They're all fair game for "Weird Al." ■



Joan Sommers to Retire from the CIA

After 60 years of active participation, renowned International accordion celebrity and frequent visitor to the AAA, Joan Cochran Sommers will retire from her official duties at the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA), an NGO Official partner of UNESCO, at the conclusion of the upcoming Coupe Mondiale in Salzburg, Austria.

In both 1955 and 1956 Joan earned the right to represent the USA in the Coupe Mondiale and says that it was those experiences which opened her eyes to the tremendous opportunities available to accordionists; as well as fixing her life-long interest in worldwide accordion activities.

Over the years, Joan has been involved in all aspects of the CIA including as a contestant, the teacher of contestants, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and member of the CIA Music Committee, CIA Vice President, Vice President of the Advancement and Development Committee, organizer of the Coupe Mondiale, recruiting and commissioning of the CIA Test Pieces on numerous occasions, Chairperson and member of the International Jury, Delegate representing the United States, recipient of the CIA Merit Award as an individual as well as for her renowned UMKC Accordion Orchestra and founder of the World Accordion Orchestra for which she commissioned several new works. Joan's trips to CIA Congress meetings have been as far away as Poland and other central and former Eastern European countries, to the extremely remote Nagigia Island in Fiji, accessible only by a tiny fishing boat, where she not only attended Congress Meetings, but also gave presentations to the local village school children.

When Joan's daughter Cathy represented the ATG at the 1999 Coupe Mondiale in Trossingen, Germany, it became the first time a Mother and Daughter had both represented a country at an International accordion competition.

In 2011, she presented the 50th Anniversary Concert of her famed UMKC Accordion Orchestra. She was awarded the title of Professor Emerita upon her retirement from the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory of Music where she established and taught the accordion degree program for forty years. During this



time she arranged innumerable works for accordion orchestra, often for the UMKC Accordion Orchestra, a large symphonic accordion orchestra, which, under her direction, competed in and won more First Prizes in Virtuoso Accordion Orchestra Competitions than any other similar American group. This is a record still unbroken today.

Today, she enjoys performing with fellow accordionists in duo, such as with Stas Venglevski with whom she released a CD which he organized in honor of her 80th Birthday, as well as with other instrumentalists and with the UMKC Chamber Accordion Ensemble who recently performed in San Francisco at the ATG Festival. In addition to her performing, she continues to adjudicate, coach soloists, prepare accordion orchestra arrangements, and conduct accordion orchestras at festivals around the world.

This years World Accordion Orchestra VIII will be a fitting tribute and finale to her glorious CIA career, when the 165 member orchestra and choir will perform 'Let There Be Peace on Earth' as the Gala Closing Concert of the Salzburg Coupe Mondiale on 1 November, 2014. The full program of World Accordion Orchestra VIII under the direction of Joan Cochran Sommers, Jacob Noordzij and Werner Weibert is as follows:

- The Sound of Music by Richard Rodgers, arr. by Werner Weibert, Conducted by Jacob Noordzij
- A Tribute to Bernstein by Leonard Bernstein, arr. by Werner Weibert, Conducted by Werner Weibert
- Let There Be Peace on Earth by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, arr. by Joan Cochran Sommers, Conducted by Joan Cochran Sommers with Choir prepared and directed by Helmut Zeilner

Joan plans to continue to attend the CIA Coupe Mondiale as her schedule permits, including her goal to attend the 2015 Coupe Mondiale in Turku, Finland, an event celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the CIA which was founded in 1935 in Paris, France.

To see the magnificent finale of Joan's World Accordion Orchestra project, please visit www.coupemondiale.org on November 1st, and follow the links to the video reports. ■



CIA Norway with Faithe Deffner and Linda Reed



CIA New Zealand World Orchestra

Interview with Helmi Harrington, Ph.D.

After having recently completed a Museum project myself, I was delighted to finally have the opportunity to turn my attentions to the incredible work of my long time friend Helmi Harrington, and was delighted to accept a position on 'A World of Accordions Museum' Board of Directors. During a visit to the museum, a proud affiliate of the AAA, I had the privilege of conducting this interview, offering a glimpse into not only Helmi's life, but also to her work in establishing this magnificent collection of instruments and related materials profiling the history of our beloved accordion. My sincere thanks to Helmi for taking time out of her busy schedule to take part in this interview.

Kevin Friedrich, AAA Newsletter Editor



Kevin: Tell us a little about the town/city where you were born.

Helmi: Although my family stems from Cologne, Germany, I was born May 22, 1945, in Bad Wörishofen, Bavaria, where my mother and grandmother had been relocated after their homes were destroyed by bombs. The small Black Forest town was famed for its spa (Kurort Pfarrer Kneip), and was then a Red Cross USA military station. While food was not plentiful, some farms were still modestly productive and people could trade such things as soap and cigarettes, which Mother (Hanni Strahl) earned by playing accordion at the commissary. She was also allowed to scrape out Mess Hall food cans.

Memories of my first five years are like snapshots colored by my mother's recollections and my projections of lifelong traits. I was quick to learn some skills that I still remember—walking at seven months, potty-training at twelve months. I recall behaviors of a toddler, like picking blue flowers to cap my fingertips, swiping a handful of sauerkraut from the landlady's basement barrel (and being reprimanded), stumbling along a forest path with my grandmother, crying when I was required to return a toy snatched from another child, being offered a chocolate Hershey bar by a soldier. The town had a pharmacy that sometimes stocked baby pacifiers—which I regularly chewed through.

I remember a kind of chain across my waist holding me in the Munich hospital bed while I recovered from mastoiditis that nearly took my life, at one year. The doctor was called away from his Christmas Eve party for emergency surgery. He said the infection was so serious that in one more day it would have entered my brain. Another recurrence in my second year had to be paid by some liters of benzene. So much skull bone was removed that my hats, and now my glasses, always sit atilt. Miraculously, no damage to my hearing resulted.

When I was about three, I stared deeply into the barrel placed at the

edge of our house to catch rain water. It contained small swimming insects. I must have lost balance and fell head first into the barrel. After a moment of panic, my mind was filled with a loving presence that told me not to be afraid because I had a long life ahead. (Now, I sense I was told something about my future, but I never recalled details of the message.) A neighborhood boy saw me and pulled me out. A decade later during my first return trip, Mother and I sought out the boy to express gratitude.



Kevin: How did you begin your music study and why did you choose the accordion?

Helmi: When my mother began a new life in the USA, she bought a house in Corpus Christi, Texas, where she established "Strahl Music Studio" using the accordion education gained in Germany at the Staedtische Musikhochschule Trossingen, then under the directorship of Prof. Hugo Herrmann. There she had learned to perform on several accordion-family instruments, run a music studio, and repair accordions. Her students soon numbered 100 per week, so she was always busy working. I had to write my name into open slots in her student schedule, which probably fostered my ambitions in the same way that my use of available studio instruments caused my notice of, and wonder about instrument quality differences.

Even as a small child, I respected her work-compulsions and remember thinking that I never wanted to add to her burdens, but rather, to be helpful. By the time I was nine years old, Mother let me help some of her slower students with their lessons. When Tommy S. said "Yes, Ma'am" to me, I was hooked on teaching! Several important moments influenced my future in my twelfth year: 1) Mother trusted me with my first independent repair job; 2) I heard Palmer and Hughes play at a national convention, marveled at their musicianship, and began my association with Palmer; 3) I won a diamond at that convention which was set into a ring reminding me daily of this accordion event.

As I think about it now, I began playing accordion as a means to spend time with my mother. My love for her probably translated into my love of making music and inaugurated the search for understanding music and instrument construction that has permeated my life.

Kevin: You have mentioned your Mother, but was your Father musical as well and how did these musical roles play out in your family?

Helmi: After Mother (nee Johanna Schorn) graduated from Trossingen, she took a job with the famous Heinz Gengler studio in Cologne. After some time, she opened her own studio on the Hohe Strasse; its sign featured her photo. That photo attracted my father's attention and he began taking accordion lessons. They married in 1939. My father (Johannes Klaus Strahl) was an electrical engineer, conscribed into military service to work in aeronautics, a desirable field under the circumstances of WWII.

Mother's studio apartment was three doors away from Cologne's SS headquarters. Windows that did not hang out the swastika or prominently show Hitler insignia were noticed. This was particularly

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dangerous because at various times and always undiscovered, the studio harbored Jews fleeing the country. Perhaps it was Father's position, or perhaps it was that the SS Commandant's wife was one of Mother's students that she was released unscathed after each of three interrogations.

Kevin: Who was your first accordion teacher and what influence did this have in your early music education?

Helmi: My mother was not only my first accordion teacher, but she was, and remains, my model in life, in business, in performance and in repairing. Her own higher education had been something of a miracle: she was born into impoverished circumstances, apprenticed to a millinery shop at twelve, self-taught on an inexpensive diatonic accordion, winner of a contest sponsored by the city of Cologne resulting in scholarship to Musikhochschule Trossingen, graduation, and prospects for productive life for herself and the mother she always supported. Education was the value she cherished and instilled in me.

Mother was an excellent musician and teacher. She had a simple remedy when my frustration level maxed out: "Play the passages again 100 times. Obstacles will be overcome by then." That was similar to the message that my piano mentors later required—10 hours practice each day. Today, I tell my students that intelligent analysis and slow practice cut down hundreds of repetitions to only very few.

Mother was the finest button diatonic accordion player I ever heard. She began my music studies with both piano- and button diatonic accordions. I, however, preferred the piano accordion and gave only minor attention to the "Club" and "Bohemian" tablatures that she loved. It was only after I understood how to correlate pitch-order systems with regular notation that my command and appreciation escalated.

She was an excellent mentor but even more importantly, an astute counselor. By the time I was thirteen, I could play most of the glib virtuoso arrangements of the 1950s and had become practiced at many repairs. A school science project made possible my first trip back to Germany—to Trossingen to show results of my experiments. That's when Mother introduced me to Hugo Herrmann, on whom I later wrote both a MM thesis and a Ph.D. dissertation. I was further inspired upon receiving comments from Ly Braun, one of her famous performance teachers.

In Mother's studio I had opportunity to play on many accordions differing in size and quality so I learned how to play and demonstrate those too large and too small for me, and to consider the elements that affect playability. I also gained a great deal of experience in accompanying students, which has served me inestimably well.



Helmi & Hanni

Kevin: What are your earliest memories of performing?

Helmi: We had newly arrived in America. I was five years old when I sang "Lili Marlene" while Mother played accordion. We won \$5.00—it seemed a big deal at the time.

My first accordion recitals were characterized by complete on-stage security. Nervousness came only years later when I realized that performances had consequences and that they reflect the intellectual and interpretive acumen of the player's mind.

Kevin: During the course of your musical education, is there any teacher or artist to whom you would like to pay particular tribute, for their inspirational effect on your musical career?

Helmi: First and foremost I mention my mother, as I already have. But other people also have been of great importance to me, professionally and personally.

Without question, one such would be Dr. Willard "Bill" Palmer. As a teacher, he was brilliant and kind. He showed me skills that took me far too long to command. His accordion books illustrate methodology well beyond technically necessary skills. They have guided and inspired my 85 teaching books.

Since I became acquainted with Faithe Deffner 45 years ago, her comprehensive involvements in every aspect of the accordion world and her intelligent way of looking at issues have been motivators in my life. Similarly, Dr. Armin Fett, musicologist of MGG renown with whom I studied in Trossingen, inspired my later research into accordion taxonomy. Near the end of his life, he honored me greatly by requesting my collaboration for his projected book expanding accordion history and construction to include America. Sadly, this book remained unfinished. And I should not fail to mention Stanley Darrow who early-on fostered my recognition of the need for musicological accordion research.

For the latter part of my fourteen years of college studies I focused on contemporary music. While not the epoch that most touches my soul, it presented analytical questions and required investigative evaluations that directly affect every skill I seek to pursue. The influences of Hugo Herrmann, as composer, and Dr. John Grubbs, as Ph.D. adviser, stand foremost in my gratitude.

Although we had too few years together, my late husband Duane Sellman's intellectual brilliance and soulfulness continues to influence my every day. He was a very fine musician who introduced me to the concertina/bandonion branch of the accordion family, who foresaw the then-evolving worldwide importance of computer technologies, and whose loving involvement supported every professional decision that followed.

Kevin: During your career, you have been involved in teaching. Can you tell us about your teaching in Texas?

Helmi: I have already commented about my youthful experiences in my mother's studio in Corpus Christi. I always worked with her and took gigs on the side, which added students to the studio. She maintained 80-100 students per week; I maintained about 25 through high school years. At this point, I cannot but intertwine teaching with my academic activities.

Mother and I taught seven days each week including recital preparations and band rehearsals. In the preceding year I had begun playing the piano. The magnificence of the instrument and its endorphin-promoting repertory inspired new dreams. When I entered Del Mar College at age 16, it was as a piano major and departmental accompanist. Because I always took overload courses, rehearsed several music majors, and prepared my own solo recitals, I reduced my number of accordion students to about 20. I chose to transfer to the University of Houston because it offered Bill Palmer's accordion classes. Despite the three-hour drive between Houston and Corpus Christi, all my students agreed to Saturday-Sunday sessions. I received a Performer's Certificate in my third year as a student of department chair Albert Hirsh. These were among the fourteen years I practiced ten hours a day because that was what was expected. It made for few hours of sleep, which remains my norm.

After receiving Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees, I entered the Ph.D. musicology program at the University of Texas at

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Austin, worked as a Teaching Assistant and eventually as a Research Associate. Although the drive between Austin and Corpus Christi was longer, I maintained a full schedule of Saturday-Sunday accordion students.

A DAAD fellowship allowed me to do dissertation research in Germany. My topic was on the Lieder of Hugo Herrmann. During my mother's time at the Städtische Musikschule, Herrmann headed the school, attracted an outstanding faculty and students like Rudolf Würthner and Marianne Probst, and was famous as a prolific composer of the stature of Hindemith. In fact, Hindemith passed on to Herrmann the commission to compose the first original piece for accordion, *Sieben Neue Spielmusiken*. It foreshadowed free-bass developments that Hohner later called Manual III. Many accordion works followed including concerti in tonally expanded harmonies akin to late-Liszt. In my years there, Dr. Armin Fett, protégé of Herrmann, headed the school. His musicological research remains landmark and was heavily used in Walter Maurer's book, "Akkordeon." In Trossingen, I took the opportunity to study accordion repair at the Hohner Company. Little did I know how significantly that extra effort would influence my life and career.

Upon my return and while writing the dissertation, I married Robert C. Harrington of Austin, and bore my two children Hanni and Charles Robert Harrington. With thoughts of retirement, Mother moved to Austin but instead began a new accordion studio, in which I of course participated. Our best students joined to form "Strahl Music Ensemble" that performed in annual ATG or AAA competitions and for which I wrote many arrangements. The adjudication skills I was taught at those events have served me well when later I was asked to adjudicate major Russian competitions.

I won the "Texas Accordion Championship" as did my student (Dr.) Mike Middleton. We were founding members of "Texas Accordion Association" and participated regularly. Our studio and repair facility attracted people from many surrounding states and was foremost in the AAA Regional Competition held in Austin in the 1980s.

Kevin: How did the opportunity arise to work with the Copiskey Studio in Minnesota?

Helmi: I came to Minneapolis in 1988 with my second husband Duane Sellman, who was among the six elite in designing AI software and chip relays for Control Data super-computers. I had no intention to begin an accordion studio, but did exactly that thanks to the dozens of 12-bass models Faithe Deffner sold us for the price of shipping. Duane lost his job when Control Data sold out. He didn't want to move to Silicon Valley so the studio and performance gigs became our livelihood.

In developing our home-studio *Accordion Concertina Music* in the Minneapolis suburb of Burnsville, we sought advantageously priced inventory and supplies. In Duluth, MN, John Copiskey had died, his daughter Dana was sending out letters involving sales of their accordion stock. We went to buy instruments a few times and I talked with Dana about my admiration for *Johnny's* studio wins at competitions. I told her about my respect for her father while sitting at adjudication tables with him. Within a few months, Dana called to say she needed relief from the demands of *Johnny's Music Room* and the *Duluth Accordionaires* scheduling and asked if I would take over their directorship. I said I would attend during a rehearsal to see how things worked, but before that first meeting, she sent letters to the performers stating that I was to take over. The DA was run by "Band Parents Association" which had already committed to and received payments for several upcoming concerts. And so, both the studio and the DA landed in my lap.

Duane and I fulfilled commitments to Johnny's prepaid students and I conducted the *Accordionaires* for years. When Dana sold the building, we chose to purchase a site in West Duluth and moved the

studio and the *Accordinaire's* there. Eventually the "Band Parent's Association" folded. Although we were offered the DA trademark name, we decided our own ACM name had made its own renown.

Kevin: Somewhere along the line, you obviously began to develop your passion for collecting instruments and repairing them. Do you remember your first collectable instrument?

Helmi: Before responding to the question, I'd like to provide some background.

After Duane and I played at an *Ironworld USA Polkafest*, we met its principal, then-Senator, Florian Chmielewski, who recommended me to head Redwing Technical College's newly-forming Accordion and Concertina Repair Department.

I devised the repair curriculum and taught the classes through my own instrument examples until federal funding for technical colleges was cut in 1993/4. Redwing TC was forced to merge with Winona TC; last-added departments were closed, including mine and several others. I informed the administration that I intended to open my own repair school. The department was of interest to the media, promptly prospective students to join a waiting list.

The Redwing experience had given evidence of the appeal our Commons area accordion displays and our regular performances found among locals and visitors. I felt deep satisfaction with the process of explaining accordion history and construction in this visual manner that merged organology, aesthetics, and scholarship to promote what is called "passion."

Within a year, our Duluth schedule included *Accordion-concertina Repair and Technicians' School (ARTS)*, established as an institution of Higher Education in Minnesota. Duane and I built display racks contrived from recycle outlets; we scrounged for tools and machinery from warehouse sales. Most of these items were high quality and are still in use. We rejoiced in the work and were thrilled with hopes for the future.

When our school opened, we had a slate of students including one from England, and about 750 accordions. A few dozen were designated for novice technicians' hands. Media coverage in newspaper articles and television, including a PBS segment, brought us international attention and an increasing flow of aficionados interested in viewing or talking about accordions. Many left their instruments for repair.

For twelve years, *ARTS* students and I presented basic accordion repair workshops and demonstrations of historic accordions displayed in the theater of *Ironworld Discovery Center USA* during their three-day *Polkafests*, which featured national performers and drew thousands from the USA and Canada. Each day the theater was filled with people who came to listen to my programs--and also to enjoy the only air-conditioned seating on the grounds! These events grounded students in customer relations and inaugurated their professional careers. Also, they vastly enhanced our visibility and customer base.

I became experienced in setting up displays, talking about and demonstrating all the accordion-family-instruments whose appearances, sonorities, repertoires, and pitch organization systems amazed audiences. Each year, I took 20-40 of these to national accordion festivals and competitions. Thus began the *Traveling Museum*.

The instrument I never included was the modest 1920s one-row button diatonic that was given me by my friend Ivar Mikaschov during University of Houston years. It did not exemplify the high ideals of musicianship I valued over the importance of common popularity, which in actuality laid the basis of world production, and in turn, emergence of the finest of accordion types. Furthermore, the unbranded instrument had been played to the point of near-discard. My mother tended to view accordions as commodities; I saw what I held as a piece of history. "It need not have monetary value to deserve honor in a museum. But there is no accordion museum... Maybe I.."

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came the unfinished thoughts. It took 20 years and many unforeseen circumstances for the vagary to become a reality.

It took almost that long for me to mature enough to understand the social and cultural significance of its humble status. In another article, you may read more about this instrument that threads its way into the present.

Kevin: How did the collection progress from there?

Helmi: Again, my response must intertwine biographical sequences, necessities of making a living, and a growing awareness of higher purpose.

We didn't start out to collect accordions. Our first priority was to acquire saleable instruments with which to build our studio. In the late-1980s, we encountered many opportunities to purchase merchandise from companies and studios going out of business. For example, we bought good student models, music, accessories, and the stage stands we still use from the Boddiker's Cedar Rapids studio. Similarly, on the very day that Dee Langley decided to clear her studio, we purchased her Videos, studio racks, and miscellany. She generously gave us her impressive collection of accordion orchestra music that greatly enhanced our holdings in this category. Such fortunate moments occurred as if fated. More than a few times we arrived near a business' deadline to vacate. Sellers were motivated to dispossess remaining stock en masse. If I saw a few that I wanted, we negotiated an advantageous price and took them all. The left over instruments usually were trade-ins needing repairs, some were potentially valuable, all were undesirable to average customers. We stored them at home, repaired and sold/traded those that were suitable, kept others as potential inventory, and put aside the antiques.

Our second priority was to acquire parts needed to make repairs. We were especially delighted when we came upon caches of repair parts, such as we found when *Karpek Accordion Company* sold out three generations of heritage in manufacture. They had innumerable cabinets of pieces, partials, experimentals, accessories, tools, machinery—almost everything we would need to restore all manufacturing stages of the instrument family. We made ten trips to the Milwaukee location, each time filling the van with treasures. Some of their best inventory and a variety of their oldest unvalued would in the future find permanent status in the museum.

Almost as a tangential, our attention turned to antiques, at first because some were beautiful or were interestingly unfamiliar. It was an exciting pursuit. Rare instruments presented themselves opportunistically, sometimes intermediated by Stanley Darrow. Stan traveled through Europe and located some of our best 19th C. examples. He also kept eyes open for documents, catalogues and books that I needed in order to classify and understand the old instruments' places in history. They were also intensely interesting documents that whetted desire for more.

The *Lo Duca* business was also in Milwaukee. Bruno was very friendly, as was one of his sons. They happily showed us their sale racks, from which I picked many that were rare. They also showed us some of their private collection, from which I was allowed to pick a few. I was even offered an entire floor in which to work if only I would come as a repairer. Later, the other son summarily disallowed our visit saying maybe they would start their own museum, and besides, they were redirecting their business to importing grape seed oil.

I have already said that the *ARTS* curriculum and museum have received substantial publicity. Every time media runs an article or video about us, donors make contact. One such included 53 accordions and many supplies from a retiring repairperson. A few women have sent boxes of parts and supplies left after a repairman's death. After a *BBC* television program, we enjoyed a barrage of offers. My AAA and ATG lecture-demonstrations of historic accordions usually

result in people coming forward with instrument and artifact donations. Perhaps one of the most significant collections came as a bulk donation of over 100 free-reed instruments from a musical instruments museum that wishes to remain anonymous. Visitors to the museum delight in the idea that a loved one will be remembered through a donation plaque placed by the displayed instrument. Letters, emails, and phone calls have brought yet more treasures. Our concerts and bus-tour guests also inspire donations. On and on it goes.

I'll tell you more about the major developments of recent years when we gained the Magnante, Palmer, and other estates in the next response.

Kevin: Obviously you had to house this amazing collection. Where have they been kept along the way, and how did you finally end up in this magnificent facility in Superior, WI?

Helmi: Remember, the collection came gradually, at first stocked in our home and then selectively displayed at Redwing TC. Later it was transferred to the Duluth, MN ARTS site, and now, at HARTS in Superior, WI.

For years, the repair school was prominent in publicity features. After the collection was organized into displays in Duluth, they became the focal point for media and tourists. We named the assortment *A World of Accordions Museum*, as a subsidiary of *ARTS*, because world production and world cultures are what it really covers. This is fitting since the USA is home to immigrants from throughout the world who brought with them only their most precious items, often including accordion-family-instruments. In the New World, the instruments were cherished connections to the homeland, whereas in the country of origin a worn instrument might be discarded or replaced. That's how our collection can be so complete.

The first prominent figure speaking on behalf of *A World of Accordions Museum* was the internationally distinguished manufacturer of *PANcordion*, *Titano*, *Video* and *Crucianelli*, Faithe Deffner. In her first mid-1990s visit to Duluth, she gasped in amazement saying "You've got it all." Behind the scene, she encouraged Dr. Peter Magnante to donate his father's musical estate. We celebrated the opening of the "*Charles Magnante Legacy*" as our first major holding in 1999. That same year, Dr. Carmelo Pino, then-president of the AAA and supported by Faithe, visited with the news that our museum would become an affiliate of the AAA.

By then, the accordion collection had grown to 1,000 instruments seriously crowded on their shelves. Faithe pressed us to relocate the museum to a larger site, which took place in 2002 after purchase of an historic landmark former church (at 1401 Belknap St., in Superior, WI) just across the bay bridge. It is truly a magnificent site. For the first time in years we had space such as I thought I would never fill.

We renamed the three-story building Harrington ARTS Center. Its subsidiaries include the museum (AWAM), the acoustically ideal Hanni Strahl Concert Hall seating 1,000 people, Accordion Resource Libraries, *ARTS #2* repair facilities (the main site of the school remains in Duluth), *ACM Studio #2* (the original studio remains in Burnsville), and Harrington ARTS Publications. Specially named areas are *The Duane Sellman Special Exhibits Area*, *Music Specialty Gift Shop*, *Accordion Video Theater*, *AAA Archival Collection Room*, and *The Deffner Legacy Room*.

An unexpected benefit of this beautiful site may be the 2013, receipt of another landmark estate, that of Dr. Willard "Bill" Palmer. Its acquisition was serendipity. During a phone conversation with his son Willard Palmer III, who had found my publications on our website, I said his father's estate needed to be preserved in our museum. He agreed and within months, boxes of music, manuscripts, photos and biographical information arrived along with Palmer's specially made one-of-a-kind Titano Super Emperor V, possibly the best accordion of our collection. The next year brought us Palmer's unique 10' vermilion and gilt harpsichord with hand painted soundboard,

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featuring two manuals, and six plectra controlled by 11 pedals. It is the concert hall's focal point. Our Palmer Festivals have become annual events.

HARTS and *AWAM* greet about 2,000 visitors annually. Many are or become accordion aficionados, scholars research their papers, and students take pride in their associations. Many national and international artists performing on our stage draw concert goers. Without fail, attendees spread the word of the wonders of accordion music (I often perform during tours) and the breathtaking beauty of the displays.



Kevin: You have undoubtedly amassed one of the most impressive collections in the world. I asked earlier about your first instrument, do you have a favorite and why?

Helmi: I don't say that we are the largest accordion collection in the world, though they now number 1,300, but I believe that we are the best. The section called "*Chronology*" has 50+ displays showing stages of accordion-family-instrument evolutions from ca. 1829 to modern state-of-the-art examples. The "*Countries of Origin*" section boasts 50+ displays specific to each country's favored types. Then there are the 30+ dedicated to showing *Traveling Museum* regulars, and another 20 dealing with special topics such as prominent accordionists, humor, miniatures, "*inside the accordion*," and more.

By the time we knew I would teach the Redwing repair courses, our home was a virtual warehouse with floor-to-ceiling stacks that allowed only pathways between rooms. I was well-prepared to teach the Redwing students from beginning basics to technician status, except that we had no world-class example. In the middle of the first semester, I learned of an estate willing to accept an offer for a *Manual III Gola* which had problems even the Hohner Company would not tackle. With confidence I purchased it, unseen and untried. Its successful repair gave us our first world-class accordion that I still pride with.

I do have other favorites—the best of their genre, and some that are particularly rare and interesting. One such is our earliest American free-bass with its forward slanted piano keyboard. It was probably made by Karl Stieglmeyer (NY), whose 1928 patent identifies this construction. Another is the 1900 *Galleazzi* (CA) three-row chromatic with 24 basses whose two bass levers allow major, minor, seventh, ninth, and eleventh chords. Scalar integrity is preserved in two octaves. One that we fondly call the "*flutter-box*" and often use in logos as an eye-catcher is the *Accordinette* with weighted air pallet to produce tremolo, and a split bellows. One that is everyone's favorite

is our *Frontalini* "cello accordion"

with its incredible sonority. And of course there is the Polverini Slovenian four-row button diatonic that I designed. I cannot overlook two "big babies" that I have difficulty in handling, Palmer's *Titano Super Emperor V* and a Russian *Jupiter*.

Kevin: In addition to the instruments, you have also been instrumental in collecting other aspects of accordion history pertaining to personalities, music and organizations. Can you tell us about this important work?

Helmi: We all know that American culture is a medley derived through massive numbers of immigrants who brought with them mores and philosophies that remain modern foundations of behavior. Much of this is expressed through music. Their music is our music and part of American civilization. Accordions have a role in all this—in history as well as today. In many ways, it tells the story of our country.

We are the only American museum of any kind seeking preservation of comprehensive information related to the role of accordions and their music. That makes this institution unique and imperative.

European accordion museums deal with regional developments; European accordion histories are often slanted in their own favor; individual companies document through biased viewpoints. We try to do better by understanding the instrument bodies that are irrefutable, which is why the collection is more than a series of albeit-beautiful carcasses. Along the way we are doing ground-breaking research through investigations that will serve those who come after. We don't yet have all the facts, but our aim is high: to truthfully consolidate information about a very complex evolution. And to make clear its importance.

A museum without order or understanding is incompatible with an educated mind. A curator owes the holdings much more. In this light, our first priority is preservation of the instruments. Accordions do not take care of themselves; the ARTS program serves to restore and maintenance them. Our parallel priority is organological research benefiting from established scholarship. That's why our libraries grew.

Library Room #1 "The Books and Recordings Room," contains reference materials and thousands of recordings that provide evidence of the functioning of old and modern accordions as well skills they fostered.

Yet this whole aspect of accordion history would not exist without the people who used and furthered the instruments. That's why our next priority is preservation of biographical information about people whose lives were, and are, centered on devotion to accordion issues.

Library Room #2 "The Files Room," contains over a million pieces of printed music and manuscripts, repair procedures, documents of history and manufacture, and research projects. Our files include an immense segment of humanity:

- stories of average people whose instrument choices further the industry,
- wholesale and retail businesses that circulate instruments,
- teachers and studio operators who serve public interests,
- educators who devise means of mental development,
- students and players who develop stamina to achieve goals,
- aficionados who appreciate music and create audiences,
- performers of popular music who draw new enthusiasts,
- concert artists whose skills provide new meaning to accordion music,
- music arrangers who make music of all styles available to performers,
- publishers who provide materials for players of varied interests,
- composers delving into new realms of expression,

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- manufacturers who provide quality instruments at fair prices,
- inventors who improved instruments for the pleasure of players,
- repairers who serve people and instruments,
- organizations that define ethics of the accordion community,
- spokespersons who clarify and promote the industry and its activities,
- scholars and historians who honor culture in documenting it.

Lists of composers and personalities in our files will soon be made public on our website. We gratefully acknowledge acquisition of massive estate holdings from Hugo Herrmann, Charles Magnante (through Peter Magnante), Art Metzler, Michael Fernino (through Mary Tokarski), Frank Gaviani Sr. (through Frank Gaviani Jr.), Marge Fremar (through Karen Fremar), Elsie Bennett (through Ron Bennett), Willard "Bill" Palmer (through Willard Palmer III), Dan Barski, Sylvia Prior (through Adrian Prior), Donald Hulme (through Martin Kessler), Deiro and Pagani Publications (through Frank Gaviani, Jr.)

Library Room #3 "American Accordionists Association Archival Collection," contains papers and photographs documenting the social importance of the organization in American culture and provides repositories for estates of prominent musicians like Charles Magnante, and Dr. Willard Palmer.



Library Room #4 "The Deffner Legacy Room" honors Ernest and Faidhe Deffner's contributions to accordion manufacture and publications;

The *Duane Sellman Special Exhibits Area* calls attention to important persons in the museum: Charles Magnante, Dr. Willard Palmer, Hugo Herrmann, the Deiro brothers, Pietro Frosini, and Russian concert artists.

I should not overlook mention of the thousands of two- and three-dimensional artworks and figurines that grace the displays and give yet another aspect of the importance assigned to these instruments' presence in the world.

Kevin: How has your work been affected by the "digital" era where letters, manuscripts and other information are no longer produced as before on written/printed formats? How are these documents that will one day be considered "historic," be preserved when they are often lost on hard drive crashes or with upgrades of systems, etc.?

Helmi: It may seem anachronistic, but I keep duplicate records of important items: home and office computers with external hard drives, discs, and paper. My most-used are the computers in writing and in finding a bit of misplaced information. But my favorite is paper

print-outs. These I can shuffle around for special purposes in organizing the several tomes into which I regularly add materials.

Certainly, we have suffered "crashes" that are more than annoying, and our present systems are again out of date. Twice we have had to take extraordinary measures to reload a new hard-drive. Still, I remain optimistic that technology will continue to improve, lessening the chances of devastating losses.

The digital age via the worldwide web is of great convenience in research and in making information available to an international readership. As already mentioned, we hope soon to make more of our assets available on our website www.accordionworld.org. Of great importance to us is that people can find us, as ca. 150/week do through email. The website is the catalyst through which we have received many donations, answered many inquiries, and made many contacts.

Digital transfer of photos, music, etc., is so fast and so convenient that it cannot be but beneficial. Many books are digitally scanned, which is another form of ensuring their survival. What I really regret is that many great recordings on vinyl will never enjoy preservation (though we are beginning CD transfers) and for all practical purposes, our Edison cylinders' contents are already lost.

Kevin: Obviously your work in setting up this magnificent display all requires funding. How has the museum been funded thus far?

Helmi: Despite the fact that we are a 501c3 organization, we have not been able to gain grants or humanitarian funding. Perhaps that is because we don't have a grant writer, and I just don't have the smarts for success in that direction.

What we continually emphasize is that our excellent museum must be sustained through annual contributions, museum memberships, and admission fees. We also have income from community events held in the concert hall and fund-raiser special events. But these always require monetary outlay that comes from reserves that are currently low.

Our income really depends on instrument and gift shop sales, repair fees, my teaching services. In other words, everything is tied together in support of the museum.

Kevin: You are reasonably isolated in your location. If the appropriate opportunity arose, do you even see your collection relocating?

Helmi: I don't share the opinion that we are isolated. We are located in an accordion-friendly area near the center of the USA, equally accessible from East, West, and South. More than just accordion aficionados are drawn to us. Visitors make the trip because Superior/Duluth are tourist attractions on the largest inland freshwater sea of the world. Every year Europeans, mainly Germans, board a cruise ship to visit here. It is a beautiful area with many activities and cultural sites to enjoy. We are on the tourist track, easily found in the center of Superior, and heartily recommended by all other prominent sites.

At this point, we are so large and complex that relocating seems impossible. What might be an "appropriate opportunity"? And where would be better?

Kevin: You have an amazing "traveling collection." Tell us about your work presenting historical workshops at festivals around the country.

Helmi: The Traveling Museum displays are marvelous. There are ca. 40 eye-catching instruments so designated, and since most of the remaining museum instruments are restored, I interject others of particular interest to people in the region of the show. Some are chosen because of the stories that accompany their history, others, because of their prestigious former owners. I demonstrate and explain the gamut of types from earliest to modern, place them in historic and ethnic perspective, explain beginner to world-class qualities, show their pitch ordering systems, explain differences in reed and construction types, and perform on each with stylistic authenticity from their intended repertoires.

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Interview with Helmi Harrington, Ph.D., cont'd.

Festival attendees, as well as people from the community pack into my display area, usually to standing-room-only. Many come repeatedly to hear more. Media people are always among them; coverage takes on a tone of respect.

The museum displays and workshops have been offered in local and regional gatherings and almost regularly at ATG or AAA festivals around the country. Last year, I drove to Victoria, B.C. for presentation at the *Coupe Mondiale*. In earlier years, I provided the show free to the sponsoring organization. Now I can ill afford the pleasure. Some organizers don't realize that it is not free for me; some have even been offended when I tell them what it really costs, which is well over the honorarium. Currently I look forward to presenting at the 2015 ATG in Illinois.

I love this aspect of my work. My own enthusiasm appears to be contagious--as reflected in expressions from awed attendees, who even years later, point to this moment in which new depths of appre-



ciation were established. I believe the demonstrations greatly improve the climate in which accordions are viewed and discussed.

Kevin: How do you see your work developing in the future?

Helmi: First and foremost, we are well-engaged in a field of research that is not only new to accordion studies, but also cannot be done in any other known facility. It requires exactly the magnitude of resources we have at hand—hundreds of early accordion-family-instruments.

There are no topics of greater significance to music as we know it than the development of Equal Temperament and Functional Tonality (harmonies that relate to each other in predictable ways). The accordion's important role in this evolution is of fundamental relevance to all music scholars of any discipline specialty. I am confident that when our present research is completed and comes to light, it will be included in texts on music history, acoustics, ethnomusicology, and general music-appreciation survey courses taught at institutions of higher education. A new academic respect for the accordion's role in developing and establishing the bases of nineteenth-century music through dissemination of accordions along trade routes is at hand.

One of my current soon-to-be-completed projects is a *Guide to the Museum* that explains the displays and identifies instruments of particular significance. It is a two-volume work that will be available at low cost--as soon as I add the latest new displays.

Concurrently, I am assembling a picture book of our historic instruments—*Beautiful Accordions*. Explanatory diagrams, patents, information of all sorts are included. It is intended to serve historians, repairers, and general-interest readers.

As soon as I can train a volunteer into making DVD transfers of VHS tapes, we will have more shows to present in our *Accordion Video Room*. All the artists who have performed here have given us permission to document and show their concerts. Similarly, when the *German Harmonica and Accordion Museum* displayed here, we cap-

tured many of the lecture/demonstrations. This room is visited by folks who cannot walk around the museum and by those just looking for entertainment. We could use a better video system....

Although I am now 69, I expect to live many more years with the energy and ambition I have always enjoyed. I still manage two studios and teach about 60 students per week in two locations 180 miles apart. My life is never boring!

Kevin: Is there a particular instrument that you are missing? What would be at the top of your list?

Helmi: I'd like to add to the museum a genuine Wheatstone *Symphonium* (we have begun two based on our patents collection specs); a Bible Regal; a three-keyboard Gaviani-style piano accordion; an Excelsior "Magnante" model, and a Kraftsov keyboard accordion.

Kevin: If someone came along with a magic wand, what would be your first wish in your overall work?

Helmi: I dream of AWAM becoming a national museum or another branch of the Smithsonian. A second wish would involve more help in completing research projects essential to accordion history.

Kevin: Just for a general overview of the accordion in the United States, we'd like to know a few facts and figures.

• **How many accordion factories were thriving in the USA at the peak time of production? Locations?**

Helmi: This is a really interesting topic that has been of special interest to me for years. While the topic has involved numerous researchers, even in compilation, results are not adequate. This is understandable since nearly all the early-1900s companies have closed and record-keepers have not come forward. Even though we have availability to more records through internet searches, more investigations are needed.

In response to popular demand, in the first quarter of the 19th C., unknown numbers of companies sprang up throughout the country. "Thriving" companies is difficult of definition. Yet how many more remained inconspicuous or faded rapidly; their records, even their names, also lost? In fact, I continue to find reference to an unknown company in the most unlikely sources.

Most of the 100+ accordions displayed in our "American Accordions" section fall into the "peak production" timeframe, 1920s-1950s. The museum occasionally receives another of the category showing a manufacturer's name and location about which nothing is known. It seems amazing: less than a hundred years have passed since the "golden age," yet the parameters and contents of American production have become vague.

We have extensive information on USA companies, locations and histories. But our research is still ongoing. Since we plan eventually to make this information available, I think I should postpone dealing with the question.

• **At peak, how many instruments per year do you think the USA produced? How many instruments?**

Again, I'd prefer to delay discussion of this subject. "Production" and "sales" quickly become separate issues. Believable evidence is hard to come by. That's another big topic.

There are more complications. In England, for example, every Wheatstone was defined, dated, numbered, and recorded when sold. American companies have never publicized their statistics or clarified serial number sequences. Intentionally or not, advertisements for major companies seem to have exaggerated output statistics. Even companies that remain current fail to respond when questioned about numbers, now or then, which is understandable in light of legal consequences and competitive secrecy.

19th C. America was hungry for immediate response to popular demands for accordions. It became the principal outlet for European-made accordions that carried their American importers names, with and without modifications. By mid-century, the practice of importing what customs documents showed as "instrument parts" (which in reality might have been completed sections needing as little as bellows

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Interview with Helmi Harrington, Ph.D., cont'd.

pins insertions) was an established means by which companies enlarged their stocks. Whether or not actually "made in America" becomes debatable. To additionally obscure matters, large distributors like Sears and Montgomery Ward used English names that imply Americanization of their products.

What is certain, is that America "produced" tens of thousands of instruments annually.

• **What is your earliest instrument?**

Our earliest accordion examples are Demian-type Flutinas whose dates of origin are estimated to be ca.1833. We have an accordion of unknown date that transitions from flutina to a lever diatonic. It may challenge "the earliest."

I should have already considered this question in larger context! We have a substantial collection of early harmonicas which may predate our flutinas. Your query has called my attention to another matter I need to investigate. My friend Dr. Martin Haeffner, of the Deutsches Harmonika Museum, may be persuaded to give opinion.

• **What is your most unusual?**

This question cannot be answered by naming only one. We have many that are important but so rare that one might not find them referenced or pictured in books. One such is our ca. 1917 Frosini piano-bass, just like the one pictured with him in early ads. I like to point out a Stamirowsky, an early three-row lever chromatic from Poland; another is what has been called an "Early American Piano Accordion," (in reality a bellowed table reed organ with buttons in piano order). I've already mentioned the Flutina-like lever diatonic; a Sym-



phonetta (a bellowed table reed-organ in two connected sections with chromatic buttons in treble and bass); one of my favorites, Accordinette (with weighted air pallet to produce tremolo, and a split bellows) along with the 24-bass Galleazzi; and Palmer's one-of-a-kind Titano Super Emperor V and his A. Cecil Taylor harpsichord. Though not likely as rare, I'd point to a Wurlitzer with false tremolo; our Frontalini "cello accordion;" and our C-System Russian Jupiter (predating repatriation).



Kevin: What can someone do to help in your lifetime of work?

Helmi: Everyone can help! Join us as a museum member and donor. Reward yourself with a weekend of volunteering at the museum. Contribute by action, deed, word, financial support. Join our "Adopt and Accordion" program that finances an individual instrument's maintenance, repair or restoration. Help with our book publications, esp. Beautiful Accordions. Look through my 85 method and repertory books for purchases. Include the museum in your will. Come for a visit—options friendly to anyone will become clear.

Kevin: What advice do you have for accordionists today?

Helmi: Accordionists owe their instruments and their skills more than just occasional use. They should love them enough to provide care with annual maintenance by a certified technician. I'd encourage them to play with ambition and to find like-minded colleagues. I'd encourage participation in, and support of, national accordion organizations that expose them to new areas of repertory and artistry. I'd encourage investigation of the wide panorama of the instrument's capacities, and by being well informed, bring credit to its repute. Further, to take pride in the instrument family's worldwide popularity by visiting *A World of Accordions Museum*. ■

AAA FESTIVAL 2014 – TARRYTOWN, NY

What a great turnout we had for the 2014 AAA Festival July 9-13 at the Double-Tree by Hilton in Tarrytown, NY.

The kick-off event was the qualifying round of performers to represent USA/AAA at the upcoming Coupe Mondiale in Salzburg, Austria from October 29-November 2, 2014.

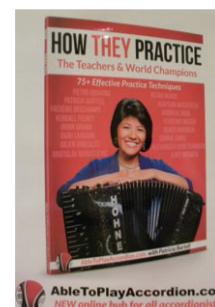
Congratulations to our two outstanding, talented young accordionists, Nathan Chapeton (CT) and Naomi Harris (WA) (pictured at right) who will represent the USA/AAA. Best of luck to both of you.



Wednesday evening's "Press and Squeeze" brought several people from local media who interviewed performers and visited our exhibit room which was always filled with ardent admirers of our beautiful instruments, music and accessories.

Thanks to the companies that exhibited which included Busy Fingers, Emilio's Accordions, Ernest Deffner Publications, Hohner, Music Magic Accordions USA, New England Accordion Museum, PANcordion, Inc. Paolo Soprani, Pigini Accordion Co., Roland Corporation U.S., SqueezinArt and Titano Accordion Co. Our prayers

go out to the family of Tommy Doyle – Busy Fingers – who passed away during the event. You will be missed.



Although Patricia Bartel was unable to attend, her student, Naomi Harris provided the materials for the Hohner exhibit.



At left, Lou Coppola & Eddie Monteiro enjoying the exhibits

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The Exhibits



**Left: Lilliana and Alex Chudolij of Music Magic
Above, Emilio Magnotta - Emilio's Accordions**



**Above right, AAA Archives and Squeezin' Art with Dan & Joan Grauman
New England Accordion Museum and Paolo Soprani with Paul Ramunni**



Titano, Pigni, PANccordion and Ernest Deffner with Frank Busso, Jr.



And that was only Wednesday!

Thursday brought young and old alike together for rehearsals – Jr. Festival Orchestra, Youth Jazz Ensemble, AAA Festival Orchestra - a busy day for all.

Thursday night on the patio...

Luncheon and Concert...



Luncheon Concert performers: Plainville Plaids (above) and Emilio Magnotta (left)



Luncheon Concert featured the Plainville Plaids rendition of "Forever Plaid" and guest artist Emilio Magnotta stepped in for

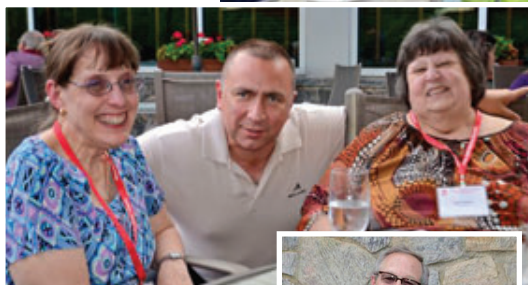
Frank Carozza, who took ill suddenly. Great entertainment, great food!

An impromptu "Dinner on the Patio" was a great addition to the Festival. The hotel featured "Prime Rib Night" and AAA friends and family enjoyed a perfect summer evening in Tarrytown with entertainment provided by Don Gerundo.

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Above: The Busso Family. Left to right: Marshall Lammers, Michael Parziale, Frank, Jr., Carmela (holding Caroline), Frank and Christina Busso Lammers (holding Alexander)



**Above: Jeanine Cariri, Manny Bobenrieth and Julie Cardona
Right: Don Gerundo**



Friday brought on more workshops, more rehearsals, more “eating” – a buffet lunch was available for the Youth Jazz participants as well as the exhibitors and volunteers. And an impromptu “Pasta Night” was a surprising treat. Friday’s concert included performances by Mario Tacca and Friends (Mary Tokarski, Julie Cardona

and Beverly Roberts Curnow); Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Steve Albini, Guy Klucevsek and Todd Reynolds, Vladimir Mollov and Mario Tacca and Mary Mancini. We thank you all for a wonderful program. Reception following for all - great time, great hors d’oeuvres.

Friday Night Gala Concert...



**Above: Mario Tacca & Friends
Mary Tokarski, Julie Cardona and
Beverly Curnow.
David Winograd on Bass**

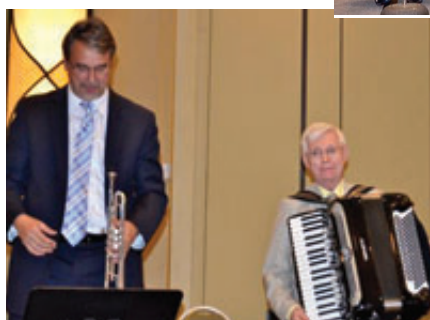
Left: Vladimir Mollov



**Above: Todd Reynolds, Violin,
Guy Klucevsek,
Accordion
At right: Mario Tacca and Mary Mancini**



**Above: Steve Albini,
Dr. Robert Young McMahan,
Accordion; Gary Fienberg,
Trumpet**



Almost done – Saturday is probably the busiest day for all. More rehearsals, more workshops, more “eating,” and a fabulous Awards Concert in the afternoon featuring the Junior Festival Orchestra and the Youth Jazz Ensemble. Many happy faces receiving trophies and medals could be seen in the crowd. Congratulations!

There was a full house for the Banquet - nice to see so many friends and their families come out to support AAA activities. Festival Orchestra under the direction of AAA President, Linda Soley Reed, performed the Second Waltz by Shostakovich, Serenata by Leroy Anderson, Rhapsody in Blue arranged by Don Gerundo, and a Beatles Medley arranged by Gary Daverne, with additional selections arranged by Don Gerundo. Thanks to Vladimir Mollov and Steve Albini for providing entertainment during the dinner!

Sunday’s breakfast and meeting brought some suggestions for future events. In particular, the focus was on getting young people interested in playing the accordion and educating “educators” on the benefits of utilizing the accordion in their music programs.

Thanks especially to Board members, Manny Bobenrieth, Frank Busso, Jr., Alex Chudolij, Joe Ciccone, Beverly Roberts Curnow, Joanna Darrow, Kevin Friedrich, Don Gerundo, Joan Grauman, Emilio Magnotta, Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Eddie Monteiro, Marilyn O’Neil, Ray Oreggia, Mario Tacca, Al Terzo, and the Festival organizers, Frank Busso, Linda Reed and Mary Tokarski for their continued support. See you in Alexandria! ■



**Vladimir Mollov conducted the Youth Jazz Ensemble.
Vlad wrote the arrangements for the group. Great job!**

**Taking a break!
Mary Tokarski,
Helen Foster
and
Linda Reed
enjoying a quiet
moment.**





Above: Dr. Joe Ciccone with daughter Gia. Dr. Joe received 1st place in the Bennett Composition Competition; daughter Gia receiving 1st place in the Elemenary Solo division



The Albini's
Steve, Sandy and Giovanni



Guy Klucevsek
Gotta love that jacket!



Above: Cody McSherry...
Growing up before our eyes!



Lauren Brody, Joan Grauman and Vladimir Mollov
Both Lauren and Vlad presented workshops



Right is new comer:
Will Comer



Far right: Beverly Roberts Curnow, Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Linda Reed and Mary Tokarski



Connecticut Colleagues:
Anita and Bob Siarkowski
with Julie Kasprzyk Cardona



The Junior Festival Orchestra conducted by Mary Tokarski



Eddie Monteiro, Pete Shuttoni, Bob Siarkowski and Bruce Gassman



The Mollov's



Lou Coppola, Lilliana Chudolij, Cousin John, Beverly Curnow and Rosemary Cavanaugh



Teachers and students - still friends after all these years:
Left - Lou Coppola & Bob McMahan;
Right - Bob Vitale and Marilyn O'Neil



Special thanks to Sandy Zera for all the wonderful pictures. You are amazing!



American Accordionists' Association



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Coast to Coast

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

Valley Forge, PA

The Accordion Pops Orchestra conducted by Al Terzo will present a concert on Sunday, September 21, 2014 at 3 p.m. at the Shannondell Performing Arts Center at Valley Forge, PA. Featured performers include 11-year old Cody McSherry on accordion and 2014 MAMTG Champion, vocalist Shanice Aquino.

Most of the twenty-five plus members of the orchestra are professional musicians or teachers and many are soloists in their own right. The orchestra performs a repertoire of light classical, Broadway, big band and popular music. Conductor Al Terzo serves on the governing board of the AAA and currently teaches accordion and piano in New Jersey. For further information: alterzo@hotmail.com

Las Vegas, NV

The 15th Annual Las Vegas International Accordion Convention took place from August 18-21, 2014 at the Gold Coast Hotel Casino in Las Vegas.

Michael Bridge and Alicia Baker, two talented young accordionists, performed to great acclaim. Michael, who earned the distinction of performing with the Boston Pops, astonished Keith Lockhart, the famed conductor, who said of Michael, "I'm amazed what you do with this instrument, I find it totally baffling!" Alicia Baker, 22, recently graduated in music with a triple degree in music education, as well as piano and vocal performance. Alicia has been performing on the accordion since age 6 and has a long list of awards and credits to her name.

Scheduled performers and workshop presenters included: Dick Contino, Joey Miskulin, Stas Venglevski, Bruce Gassman, Peter and Mady Soave, Ron Borelli, Paul Pasquali, Pete Barnutti, Gordon Kohl, Gina Brannelli, Elena and Gregory Fainshtein, Liz Finch, Mary Tokarski, Shelia Lee, and the Seventh Annual Las Vegas International Accordion Orchestra directed by Professor Joan C. Sommers.

For more information please visit www.accordionstars.com

Detroit, MI

Acclarion, Canada's premier accordion and clarinet ensemble, is giving classical music a makeover! Since 2003, with virtuosic flare and entertaining banter, accordionist David Carovillano and clarinetist Becky Sajo-Carovillano have charmed audiences

with their unique arrangements of classical masterpieces, sultry tangos, popular folk tunes, and original compositions in concerts that are fun for all ages.

David and Becky both hold Master's degrees in music from the University of Toronto, Faculty of Music, and have played with major ensembles including the Stratford Festival, ArrayMusic, members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Tapestry Music, and the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra. Television appearances include City TV's "Breakfast Television," HGTV's "Design For Living," Global TV's "Ready Or Not" as well as several Roger's television programs.

The duo will perform Sunday, October 19th, 2014 at the Scarab Club Chamber Music Concert at 7 p.m. to be held at 217 Farnsworth in Detroit, MI. Tickets are \$22 at door or \$18 in advance. For more information, please visit www.acclarion.ca.

Middle Island, NY

Accordionist Dominic Karcic recently performed at the Birchwood Italian Cultural Club in Middle Island, NY on Friday, August 1, 2014. Pictured here (left to right) are events coordinator Ralph Zeth, Dominic Karcic and club president, Josephine Cohen.



Kansas City, MO

Radio DJ Phil Maq featured one of the songs from popular Kansas City accordionist Jane Christison's CD, "Come Sing Along with Janie Next Door" on his "Theme Attic" Show. A musician, singer, songwriter and well known entertainer, Jane regularly performs throughout the great Kansas City area.

Her newest musical venture is writing children's songs and performing as Janie Next Door® in upbeat, entertaining, interactive, live musical programs for children at preschools, elementary school concerts, festivals, libraries, birthday parties and other special occasions. For more information about Jane's children's project, please visit www.janienextdoor.com.



Costa Mesa, CA

On Sunday, September 28, 2014 California will come alive with accordion music at the 4th Annual O.C. Accordion Festival - The Big Squeeze, which includes 4 to 5 stages of accordion based bands/performers representing a variety of music genres. The festival will take place from 10. a.m. to 4 p.m. with admission being \$2.00 The festival will take place at the OC Fairgrounds, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, CA.

West Allis, WI

On Monday, September 22, 2014 the popular group based in Oshkosh, Wisconsin "Copper Box" will be the featured entertainment for the monthly gatherings of the Milwaukee Accordion Club. This "New Age Polka Group" performs with a very lively party band style.

Their musical styles include, but are not limited to, Polkas, Cajun, Zydeco, Country, Blues and Tex-Mex. The performance will take place at the Knights of Columbus located at 1800 South 92nd Street, in West Allis, WI. For more information, please visit www.accordion.com/mac.

East Northport, NY

Internationally acclaimed artist, Mary Tokarski will be the guest of the Long Island Accordion Alliance on Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at LaVillini Restaurant in East Northport, NY. Nathan Chapeton, Mary's student who will be representing the USA / AAA in the upcoming world cup competition in Salzburg, Austria will also perform.

Reservations are recommended: 631-261-6344. The LIAA recently celebrated its 4th anniversary.

Congratulations!



Brooklyn, NY

Guy Klucevsek lead a workshop 'Unusual and Unorthodox Techniques for Accordion' at the Brooklyn Accordion Club meeting on Sunday September 14th, 2 - 4 p.m.



The club will also be celebrating the premiere of the Brooklyn Accordion Club magazine ZINE!, which will be distributed at the next meeting. The Brooklyn Accordion Club meets at 61 Local, 61 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY.

Branford, CT

CAA upcoming meetings: September 27 at Vasi's in Waterbury - Fred Schwenger; October 26 at Vasi's in Waterbury - Ed Hendela. Meetings begin at 1:00 p.m. Call for reservations (203-272-1202). The Connecticut Accordion Orchestra's Christmas Concert will be held on Saturday, December 6 at the James Blackstone Library in Branford. Concert begins at 2:00 p.m. Special guest artists, holiday favorites, something for everyone.

Astoria (Queens), NY

Valtaro Celebration honoring Frank Toscano will be held at Riccardo's in Astoria. An afternoon of music for your listening and dancing sponsored by the American Accordionists' Association.

Sunday, September 28, 2014
12 noon until 5:00 p.m.

Riccardo's by the Bridge
21-01 24th Avenue
Astoria (Queens), NY 11102
Choice of Prime Rib, Chicken
Francaise or Broiled Salmon

Music provided by Dominic Karcic & Ray Oreggia, Frank Carozza, Emilio Magnotta, Eddie Monteiro and the honoree himself, Frank Toscano.

For reservations, call 203-378-1120 or 203-335-2045. Limited space available so if you haven't sent in your reservation, do it now!