



From the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 Edition of the AAA Newsletter!

As we welcome the autumn weather, we hope you are enjoying a variety of performances and accordion events, either in person or online.

The focus of accordion activities turned towards our international event, the annual "Coupe Mondiale" World Accordion Championships held under the auspices of the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) in Zofingen, Switzerland, October 4-9. Daily photographic and video reports can be found online at coupemondiale.org.

Thank you all for your support with the AAA Newsletter. We are delighted to be able to share your news and activities with our readers. We appreciate hearing from you!

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

Items for the Winter 2022 Newsletter can be sent to me at ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com. Please include 'AAA Newsletter' in the subject box, so that we don't miss any items that come in. As always, text should be sent within the email or as a Microsoft Word attachment if possible. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg file (or similar) and the larger the file size the better. We can always reduce/crop the picture if necessary, however we are unable to increase the quality from smaller pictures. Please send your items as soon as possible to ensure they are included in the upcoming issue.

Sincerely,
Kevin Friedrich, AAA Newsletter Editor - ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com



Congratulations to the 2022 AAA Virtual Competitors!

***See pages 4 and 5 of this publication for
results and photographs!***

***Cash prizes generously donated by
The Mary and Frank Tokarski Musical Arts Fund***

75th Coupe Mondiale in Zofingen, Switzerland

The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) held its 75th Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships and 148th CIA International General Assembly of Delegates in Zofingen, Switzerland. The event was hosted by CIA member accordeon.ch, October 4-9, 2022.

Founded in 1935 in Paris, France, the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) is a member of the International Music Council, an NGO official partner of UNESCO). The American Accordionists' Association (AAA) and the Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG) have long since shared the USA membership to the CIA.

Over 80 contestants competed in six categories of competition, with winners representing a variety of countries. This year's Coupe Mondiale winner was Serbian accordionist Dragoslav Vasiljevic. In an exciting competition, after three demanding rounds of competition held over several days, with a score of 23.49, he narrowly edged out Hang Ding from China, who was just fractions of a point behind with 23.41.

The American delegation this year included Kevin Friedrich representing the AAA (also CIA Ambassador) and ATG President Mary Ann Covone, Joan Cochran Sommers (CIA Honorary Member and President of the 75th Coupe Mondiale Jury), and Liz Finch representing the ATG.

The Mayor of Zofingen, Christiane Guyer, welcomed everyone to the 75th Coupe Mondiale during the Opening Ceremony Concert, which featured an array of unique Swiss performances, including Yodeling and Alp Horns as well as the winner of the 2021 Coupe Mondiale held in Munich, Olzhas Nurlanov.

Three special presentations were made during the event, including the CIA Merit Award for outstanding contributions to the international accordion movement, which went to Vojin Vasovic from Serbia and Professor Ricardas Sviackevicius from Lithuania, while the Honored Friend of the Accordion Award for services to the accordion movement was presented to lois Breitfuss from Austria.

After Mirco Patarini (Italy) was re-elected as CIA President last year, this General Assembly included elections for all other offices. Newly-elected CIA Executive Committee members include Kevin Friedrich (USA - Ambassador), Zorica Karakutovska (North Macedonia - Vice President), Jörgen Sundeqvist (Sweden - Vice President), Kimmo Mattila (Finland - General Secretary), Alexander Silivanov (Russia - Chairperson of the Music Committee), Harley Jones (New Zealand - Public Relations Manager), and Li Cong (China - Vice President).

In addition to the re-elected Chairperson, Alexander Selivanov (Russia), members of the CIA Music Committee include Grayson Masefield (New Zealand - Vice Chairperson), Jiří Lukeš (Czech Republic), Ruedi Marty (Switzerland), Danijela Gazdic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Antonio Spaccarotella (Italy), and Crystal Wang (CongYu Wang) (China).

To complement the competitions, several magnificent concerts were held, including the spectacular Misa a Buenos Aires by Martin Palmeri performed by the Accordion Orchestra Brittnau and the Soland Choir under the direction of Ruth Soland, with soloists Susanne Wiesner (Alto) and Julien Tudisco (Bandoneon).



Continued on next page...

Coupe Mondiale...continued from previous page

The 60-strong Blue Project Orchestra was a group formed specifically for the event and performed under the baton of Lionel Chapuis. The program included works related to 'blue,' including Blue Rondo a la Turk, Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin with piano soloist Etienne Murith, and Bluesette by Jean Thielmanns and Wolfgang Russ.

The awards concert opened with the world premiere of a Finnish work by renowned composer Kalevi Aho, when Janne Valkeajoki performed his Sonata No. 3.

After five busy days of competitions and concerts, the Coupe Mondiale festival came to a close with the stars of the event, the young artists themselves with the awards presentation and concert featuring the winners of the six categories of competition:

Coupe Mondiale

- 1st: Dragoslav Vasiljevic (Serbia)
- 2nd: Hang Ding (China)
- 3rd: Alessandro Pagliari (Italy)

Masters Coupe Mondiale

- 1st: Radovan Ivanovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- 2nd: Drago Garic (Serbia)
- 3rd: Aleksandar Radovic (Serbia)

Junior Coupe Mondiale

- 1st: Antonio Del Castillo (Germany)
- 2nd: Mantas Leonardo Lizzi (Lithuania)
- 3rd: Husejn Bajraktarevic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

International Competition for Virtuoso Entertainment Music

- 1st: Vladimir Kashuta (Ukraine)
- 2nd: Anastasija Zubova (Latvia)
- 3rd: Joaquín Donoso Muñoz (Chile)

Junior International Competition for Virtuoso Entertainment Music

- 1st: Emanuele Viti (Italy)
- 2nd: Matteo Tortora (Italy)
- 3rd: Francesco Perna (Italy)

International Competition for Ensemble Music - Classical

- 1st: Duo Diverso (Lithuania) - Alma Petrauskaite (accordion) and Kristina Jeganian (piano)

The CIA Swiss member accordeon.ch organizers President Yvonne Glur and CIA Honorary Vice President Ruedi Marti received a standing ovation for staging the event. All activities, including concerts, competitions, events, and final results with all adjudicator marks, can be viewed online in the Daily Reports and Video Center found on the CIA Coupe Mondiale website, coupemondiale.org. Champions from the 75 years of competitions, including many USA winners can be found on the CIA website at accordions.com/cia.



Plans are now underway for the 76th Coupe Mondiale, to be held in Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, October 5-9, 2023.

2022 AAA Virtual Competition Results

As the AAA continues to prioritize the health and safety of its members and event attendees, the association's second virtual competition provided a stellar opportunity for accordionists of all ages and abilities to perform, compete, and improve. Competition organizer Frank Busso, Jr. oversaw the event, with Mike Silvia providing technical and assistance for the contestants and adjudicators.

This year's entries were adjudicated by Frank Busso, Sr., Joanna Darrow, Kevin Friedrich, Eddie Monteiro, and Mary Tokarski. The results are as follows:

Open Solo Juniorette

Francesca Busso GOLD
Julianna Busso GOLD
Iven Kavich SILVER
Nemanja Zivanovic GOLD

Open Solo Junior

Caroline Lammers GOLD

Open Solo Intermediate

Adam Fundak GOLD
Alexander Lammers SILVER

Open Solo Senior

Zach Grindle GOLD
Rowena Liu BRONZE

Open Solo Adult

Megumi Hada GOLD

Founder's Solo Intermediate

Adam Fundak SILVER

Pop Solo Junior

Nicholas Busso GOLD

Jazz Solo Senior

Zach Grindle SILVER

Honors Solo Juniorette

Julianna Busso 1st
Iven Kavich 2nd

Honors Solo Junior

Caroline Lammers 1st

Honors Solo Intermediate

Max Hoffmann 1st
Alexander Lammers 2nd

Open Duet Juniorette

Francesca Busso and
Julianna Busso GOLD

Open Mixed Duet

Julianna Busso (accordion) and
Patrick Hamilton (piano) GOLD

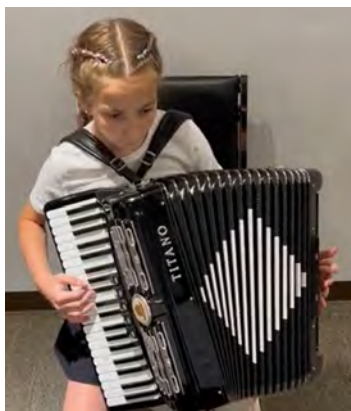


Mary & Frank Tokarski

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



2022 AAA Virtual Competition Contestants



Caroline Lammers



Francesca Busso



Max Hoffmann



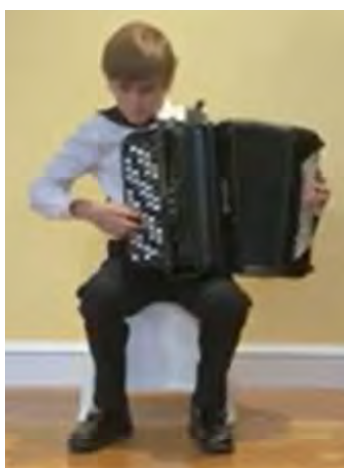
Adam Fundak



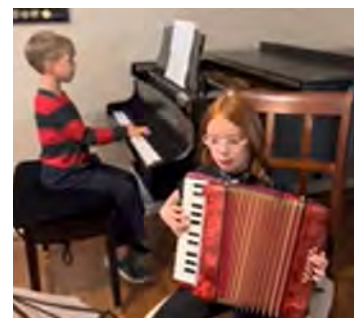
Nicholas Busso



Zach Grindle



Nemanja Zivanovic



Patrick Hamilton and Julianna Busso

Congratulations to all of our competitors and their teachers!



Megumi Hada



Rowena Liu



Alexander Lammers



Iven Kavich

ATG Celebrates its 80th Anniversary Festival in Grand Style

Founded in 1940 in Chicago by President Emeritus Anthony Galla-Rini, the Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG), while 82 years old as an organization, after COVID-related delays, was finally able to reunite in person and celebrate its 80th Anniversary Festival in Lisle (Chicago), Illinois.

Featuring a lineup of artists representing diverse musical genres, guests and activities included: Michael Bridge (Canada), Stas Venglevski (USA), Mirco Patarini (Italy), Nikolay Bine (Canada), Murl Allen Sanders (USA), 80-member ATG Festival Orchestra, University of Missouri Kansas-City (UMKC) Community Accordion Ensemble, an Accordion Petting Zoo, competitions, educational workshops, social activities, exhibits, and much more!

ATG President Mary Ann Covone and the Board of Directors welcomed attendees from as far afield as Austria, Italy, and throughout the USA and Canada to the four-day festival that showcased the accordion at its finest.

Paying homage to its founder, the ATG released a new CD showcasing the Concerti of Anthony Galla-Rini. Concerto No. 1 features US Champion soloists Karen Fremar, Robert Sattler, and Jeff Lisenby each performing a movement with the UMKC Accordion Orchestra under the direction of Joan Sommers; Concerto No. 2 features Stas Venglevski with the Racine Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Pasquale Laurino, and the CD includes an incredibly rare bonus track of Galla-Rini himself performing the World Premiere of his Concerto No. 1 with the Oklahoma City University Symphony Orchestra under the direction of James Neilson, recorded in 1941. To celebrate the new CD and the 80th Anniversary, Stas performed the Concerto No. 2 at the Gala Closing Concert with William Morse conducting the Racine Symphony Orchestra.

New this year was the popular "Petting Zoo" where the general public was invited to get some first-hand experience with the accordion. Popular entertainer Jane Christison performed popular children's pieces while volunteers with 12-bass instruments assisted the public

with their introduction to the accordion.

The festival culminated with the magnificent 80-piece accordion orchestra in honor of the 80th anniversary. The orchestra presented a spectacular program of works by Jarre, Galla-Rini, Sibelius, Kabalevsky, Hardiman, and



Rodgers and Hammerstein in the Armerding Concert Hall at Wheaton College, under the direction of world renowned conductor and past ATG President Joan Cochran Sommers.

Mirco Patarini, President of the Confédération Internationale des Accordionistes (CIA) was in attendance to offer his congratulations to the ATG. Galla-Rini himself was a former CIA Vice President and successfully petitioned the ATG's CIA membership more than 70 years ago at a General Assembly in Paris, in 1951.



Further information, including purchasing the new Galla-Rini CD and Concert and event videos, will be available at atgaccordions.com.



Elsie Bennett Composition Competition Winner Neil Thornock

Neil Thornock, of Provo, Utah, won the American Accordionists' Association (AAA) Elsie Bennett Composition Competition this year with his lovely new work, a haunting accordion solo titled Moon-kiss'd Conifers.

Neil Thornock has composed for a variety of ensembles, including orchestra, electronic, chamber, and solo works. Much of his music is written for his own idiosyncratic keyboard technique on organ, piano, carillon, accordion, and other instruments. In 2019, he premiered his three-hour work Planetarium for organ and electronics.

Currently, Thornock is professor of composition and theory at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah where he resides with his wife Tammy and their seven children.



Open Category

Moon-kiss'd Conifers

♩ = 50 Exceedingly Tranquil

Accordion

Neil Thornock writes: "I composed Moon-kiss'd Conifers to showcase the stunning and very reverberant acoustic of the central atrium in the Harris Fine Arts Center at Brigham Young University, a building which will be demolished in the beginning of 2023. The slowly shifting harmonies and supple melodies give space for the resonance to shine through. The result is nocturnal and perhaps a bit liturgical.

It's also a farewell tribute to a building I have worked in and loved for more than half my life. As a late-life beginner of the accordion who has an extensive music background otherwise, I have been on the lookout for music that is easy enough for my budding technique but musically challenging enough to sustain my interest.

I wrote this piece to suit my own accordion technique, which mostly consists of carrying over my organ technique to the accordion keyboard and a little bit of left-hand experience."

If you would like to purchase a copy, please e-mail Neil Thornock at: neilthornock@gmail.com. Please visit the AAA website to view video of Moon-kiss'd Conifers performed at the Harris Fine Arts Center by the composer, at ameraccord.com/bennett.php

Mario Tacca and Vocalist Mary Mancini in Concert

Accordionist Mario Tacca and vocalist Mary Mancini have a busy fall season. They form a unique duo, entertaining with an eclectic repertoire sure to please everyone. Put one of their performances on your calendar and you will be happy you attended!

Longtime AAA Governing board member Mario Tacca was born in Italy. During his childhood, his family moved to the Alsace Lorraine region of France where he began his musical studies. This is where his love and intense desire to play the accordion began. He loved the sound! He would pick up the accordion and imitate some of the songs his mother used to sing. The desire and love never diminished, despite having to walk three miles weekly to his teacher with his instrument strapped to his back!

While in France, he was the winner of many regional and national accordion competitions. He went on to become a world champion, winning the World Cup of Italy, the Grand Prix of Paris, the US National Competition, and the International Accordion competition held at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Mario Tacca dazzles audiences across the US and around the world with his unmatched virtuosity on the accordion and his exciting interpretations of international music, the classics, and pop.

Mario was recently seen on MTV in a commercial for a pilot Italian Food program. He was also on the Food Network in a commercial for "Throwdown with Bobby Flay." His latest recording, "Journey Through the Classics," features great melodies from the Classic Repertoire. Additionally, he and Mary Mancini have just released their latest duet CD, "Ricordi." It is a collection of Italian melodies, featuring Mary and Mario together, and Mario performing solo.

Internationally acclaimed vocal artist Mary Mancini has been featured in the New York Times, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, and the Journal News, and has performed in a variety of venues around the world. Able to sing in eight different languages, Mary draws from a deep repertory reservoir. She is adept at pop, showtunes, operatic arias, and sacred music and has received worldwide acclaim. Le Republicain Lorrain, in Alsace-Lorraine, France, writes that the "purity of her voice, the ease with which she interpreted the most difficult pieces showed that she is a great artist." The Spring City Evening News in Kunming, China, writes that "audiences were greatly impressed by Mary Mancini's singing ability... Through her music, we see her heart is smiling."

Mary has headlined numerous concert halls and festivals in North America, Europe, and China. She has performed at the Garden State Arts Center, Resorts International Casino Hotel, Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, and Mohegan Sun Resort Casino in Connecticut. Mary, with Mario Tacca, has completed two concert tours of China. As guests of the China Ministry of Culture, they toured five cities in three weeks and performed with three symphony orchestras. Joining them on their tour was highly acclaimed Chinese tenor, Douglas Song. In addition to performing with the symphony orchestras, some of the most memorable moments included a performance held at the 1600-seat True Color Jazz Supper Club in the booming city of Shenzhen and in the 3500-seat Golden Opera House.

In addition to a busy concert schedule, which keeps her on the road for over 200 days a year, Mary also maintains an active recording career. On "Canzoni dal Cuore," her CD of Italian love songs and arias, Mary sings with passion many of the classic songs from the Italian repertoire. The album also includes her own composition, "Preghiera, Ninnanna," set to the music of Pietro Mascagni. The Red Cross selected Mary's original composition, "With Open Arms," to accompany its video tribute to the September 11 victims. Mary was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Order of the Sons of Italy in America for her ongoing outstanding musical contribution to the arts.

Future 2022 Performances:

- Classical Meets Jazz Concert: Sunday, November 20, 2022 at 4:00 PM, St. Joseph and St. Mary Immaculate Church, 463 Tomkins Avenue, Staten Island, NY, Reservations: 718-816-0047. Tickets: \$30 through Eventbrite
- A Glorious Christmas Concert: Friday, December 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM, Church of the Assumption, 920 First Street, Peekskill, NY 10566

Mary Mancini and Mario Tacca are available for: Concert and show performances, Church Weddings, Wedding Receptions, Special Events, Corporate Events, and In-home/Private Performances. For further information: manciniandtacca@gmail.com or cell (914) 737-8872



Weird: The Al Yankovic Story, starring Daniel Radcliffe

The official trailer for “Weird: The Al Yankovic Story,” the upcoming comedy about the life and career of the biggest-selling comedy recording artist of all time, “Weird Al” Yankovic, played by Daniel Radcliffe, has been released.



“Weird: The Al Yankovic Story” is coming to The Roku Channel this Fall. The movie will focus on the prolific career of accordionist Weird Al, a Grammy winning musician and pop culture icon. It will be Roku’s first original biopic. Also, IZ2 Comics announced a new “Weird Al” graphic novel coming soon! Rainn Wilson of “The Office” fame has also been cast as legendary bizarre radio host (and “Weird Al” mentor) Dr. Demento.

Daniel Radcliffe said, “Wearing the Hawaiian shirt is a huge responsibility that I don’t take lightly.” Radcliffe told People, “And I’m honored to finally share with the world the absolutely 100 percent unassailably true story of Weird Al’s depraved and scandalous life.”

Daniel Radcliffe wasn’t content to just mime along with an instrument for the portrayal. No, Radcliffe went out and learned to play Yankovic’s signature instrument - the accordion - to properly embody the beloved comedy-music entertainer.

According to a press release, “The biopic holds nothing back, exploring every facet of Yankovic’s life, from his meteoric rise to fame with early hits like ‘Eat It’ and ‘Like a Surgeon’ to his torrid celebrity love affairs and famously depraved lifestyle.” Eric Appel will direct from Yankovic’s script, which he co-wrote. Appel commented, “When Weird Al first sat me down against my will and told me his life story, I didn’t

believe any of it, but I knew that we had to make a movie about it.”

Yankovic shared that he is “absolutely thrilled that Daniel Radcliffe will be portraying” him in the film, joking of the British actor, “I have no doubt whatsoever that this is the role future generations will remember him for.” Roku Head of Original Scripted Programming Colin Davis joked in the press release, “There clearly aren’t enough biopic movies about famous musicians and we were excited to shine a light on the incredibly true, unexaggerated story of Weird Al.” He finished his statement on a more serious note, saying “This is sincerely the ultimate combination of talent, creativity, and friends, coming together to make something genuinely funny and we could not be prouder to call this film a Roku Original.”



A Trip to A World of Accordions Museum needs to be at the top of everyone's bucket list! By Joan Grauman Morse - AAA Historian

I have been wanting to return to Superior, Wisconsin to see this incredible museum and its equally incredible founder and curator, Dr. Helmi Harrington, since my first visit in 2005. My wish finally came true in late July! My husband Bill, our little dog Metro, and I took our camper to beautiful Duluth, Minnesota (on Lake Superior, just minutes from the museum in Superior, WI). The next day, bright and early, we headed for A World of Accordions Museum, housed in a large and gorgeous old church right over the bridge from Duluth into Superior.

Helmi opened the museum just for us that day and it was truly wonderful having her all to ourselves! Dr. Helmi Harrington is a warm and delightful "walking encyclopedia of all-things accordion." Her enthusiasm is infectious, and she loves sharing her knowledge and her collection - the largest and most complete in the world - with those of us who share her passion. My husband and I definitely "fit that bill!"

Not only is the museum packed with a visual wonderland of 1300-plus accordions of all ages, sizes, and systems, but it also houses an accordion and concertina repair school, a teaching academy, libraries, the American Accordionists' Association Collection, and a breathtakingly beautiful concert hall named for Helmi's mother, the celebrated accordionist and teacher Hanni Strahl. As one walks through the halls and the floors of the museum, the visual delights fill the senses! In between, above and below all of the well-documented instruments are figurines, paintings, and other artifacts depicting the accordion. In Helmi's words, "Decorative art and artifacts shown throughout the building emphasize the pervasive presence of the instruments' image in society." To truly appreciate everything in the museum, one would need weeks of daily visits.

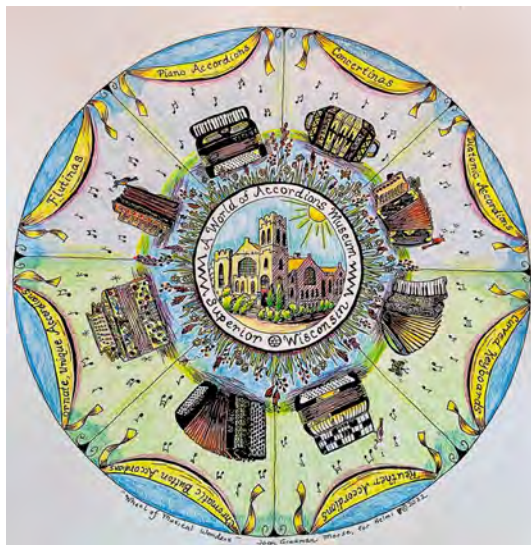
Helmi and I have worked side-by-side at festivals and have been friends for years. I wanted very much for Bill to meet her and to experience the museum. Bill has just retired as principal conductor of the Jefferson Symphony Orchestra in Golden, Colorado. He began his musical career as an accordionist, majored in piano and percussion



at Oberlin Conservatory, and received his doctorate in conducting. His passion is still the accordion, so he was very excited stepping into the museum. Bill's reaction was "Wow!!!!!" He was overwhelmed and enjoyed every moment in the archival sections and the concert hall. He happily thanked Helmi and thought we had seen everything. I said, "Wait - we haven't seen the ACCORDIONS yet!" Bill was shocked! There are more accordions? Helmi led us to the lower level.

We opened the doors to a Disneyland of accordion delights and historical wonders! I cannot even begin to describe the feeling of being in this magical environment! We both enjoyed every moment we spent there and still speak about it daily!

I strongly encourage everyone to schedule a trip to Superior for a tour of A World of Accordions Museum. You will love the experience! Please visit the museum's website to learn more about Helmi, her repair school, her collections, and for concert and event schedules: worldofaccordions.org.



Dr. Robert Young McMahan features a comprehensive series of articles discussing the history and musical qualities of AAA

The first AAA Commission was Prelude and Dance, Op. 69 by renowned American composer Paul Creston (1906-1985), written for accordion solo in 1957.

The inspiration for selecting the first commissionee of the newly formed Composers Commissioning committee came, interestingly, from the chairperson, Elsie Bennett's then 18-year-old son Ronald, who played oboe in the American Composers Youth Orchestra. At the time, the ensemble was rehearsing Paul Creston's Invocation and Dance (Op. 53, 1954) for an upcoming concert. The young oboist was so enthralled by the New York-born composer's work that he skipped lunch for a week in order to save up enough money to purchase a recording of it. Creston attended the performance and Ms. Bennett, also present (at her son's urging), approached him to discuss a possible AAA commission. They made an appointment for the next week at which he agreed to write an accordion solo.



During that time, the composer was completing his 23rd year as organist at St. Malachy's Church in New York, as well as serving as president of the National Association for American Composers and Conductors, and could list among his numerous works five symphonies (of the final six he was to eventually compose), the first two violin concerti, a Requiem and Missa Solemnis, a marimba concertino as well as several works for saxophone (both instruments certainly constituting an encouraging sign for one seeking a composer to write for yet another considerably new and under-represented instrument!), and numerous band and orchestra pieces with such festive generic names as Invocation and Dance (mentioned above), Celebration Overture, and Dance Overture.

Although composers of Creston's considerably conservative, tonal, "neoclassical" leanings were going out of vogue in contemporary music circles during the late 1950s, in favor of post-World War II atonal and avant garde figures (such as Ernst Krenek and Lukas Foss, who were to eventually accept AAA commissions as well), his music had nonetheless been highly acclaimed and widely performed, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s. Furthermore, he had been a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the prestigious New York Music Critics' Circle Award. All discussion of trends aside, however, Creston's writing was extremely individualistic, highly skilled and inventive, and to most

concertgoers, very enjoyable as compared to that of many other more fashionable composers of the day.

Ms. Bennett found this son of a poor Italian-born house painter (the actual family surname is Guttoveggio) to be a cordial, patient, and most delightful human being, who was not only willing to write for the accordion, but confessed that the accordion had always fascinated him, due perhaps to its power and its ability to reproduce sforzando and piano which is in the realm of the bass. From the accordion's system of [stradella] basses, one can gain unusual harmonic effects by combining the basses with what the right hand can do. Creston's Italian roots and youthful experience as a theatre organist may also have helped bring about his favorable view of the accordion.



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AAA Commissioned Works...continued from previous page

With this first commission and all others that were to follow with a host of composers both famous and less known, Bennett supplied important information on the layout and capabilities of the accordion as well as helpful accordion scores and recordings. In addition, she would illustrate the accordion's qualities by playing for the composer and assigning one of the prominent accordion artists of the time to work with him or her as well. In the case of this commission, Carmen Carrozza was called into service, as he would be for a number of future commissions, many for which he gave the official premiere as well.

The Bennett and Creston families soon became close friends, even after the latter moved in 1968 to the other side of the US following Paul's acceptance of a teaching position at Central Washington State College, in Ellensburg, Washington.

The resulting first and historic AAA commissioned composition was given a rather typical Creston title, Prelude and Dance (also the name of a piece for band, Op. 76, written two years later) which he classified as his 69th acknowledged opus. The Prelude and Dance was contracted on March 10, 1957 and published by Pietro Deiro Publications the following year. It was premiered at Carnegie Hall on May 18, 1958, as part of a large joint concert featuring Andy Arcari, Carmen Carrozza, Tony Dannon, Daniel Desiderio, Angelo Di Pippo, Carl Eimer, Myron Floren, Anthony Galla-Rini, and Charles Magnante. An article by Charles Ross Parmenter in the New York Times the next day does not state which of these major artists played the work in question, though the writer was informed by Elsie Bennett that it was Carmen Carrozza. This is not surprising since Carrozza also coached many AAA commissioned composers and premiered their works over the next decade.

Also mentioned in the Times is the fact that the Prelude and Dance was to serve as the test piece for the 1958 AAA National Competition. In addition, it was one of the few AAA commissions to enjoy inclusion in a widely distributed commercial LP recording, in this case by Charles Magnante (who normally avoided twentieth century classical works in his repertoire), on the Grand Award label, "Magnante...In Concert!" (G.A. 268 S). It is probably the most widely liked and performed of all the AAA commissions to date.

For complete analysis of this work, including musical samples and fascinating historical pictures, as well as information on the other works commissioned by the AAA, please visit ameraccord.com.

PRELUDE AND DANCE

PAUL CRESTON, Op. 69

0980

Order Sons and Daughters features Dominic Karcic and Frank Toscano

The Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America and The Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro Lodge #2319 presented the Long Island Accordion Alliance with AAA Board members, Dominic Karcic and Frank Toscano on September 25, 2022.

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

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

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

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

Now, some 50 years later, the school continues to flourish with talent of all ages. Still teaching everyday, his undying passion for music and performing never seems to subside. He has performed live with and for many artists including Michail Baryshnikov and Aidan Quinn, and can also be heard on many recordings of other artists...too numerous to mention. Frank performed for Steve Schirripa and the entire Sopranos' cast to help launch a new TV show.

Originally from Astoria in New York City, AAA Board member, accordionist, pianist, and band leader Dominic Karcic attended William Cullen Bryant High School, New York College of Music, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree, and the City University of New York (CCNY), where he received his Masters Degree in Music.

Dominic has always played professionally (accordion and piano) in the New York metropolitan area and continues to do so today. He and his musicians, "The Continental Sound," have been house musicians at the Columbus Citizens Foundation (NYC) for over 25 years and he has played for organizations like the Valtarese Foundation (Parma, Italy), Fubinese Society (Piemonte, Italy), Italian Charities of Queens, NY, Italian Heritage Association of Long Island, La Pace Restaurant (Glen Cove, NY), and at 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.

Dominic founded the Long Island Accordion Alliance (LIAA). 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 and its events the "Voice of the Accordion on Long Island." He also created and performs with various singers in a program titled "From Broadway to the Met," which features the music of the American Song Book and Opera.



For information on this and the many upcoming performances and events sponsored by the Long Island Accordion Alliance, please email dkarcic10@gmail.com.

28th Annual Accordion Master Class and Concert Series

The 28th annual Accordion Master Class and Concert Series hosted by Dr. William Schimmel was hailed a great success. The very unusual and highly regarded annual mid-summer New York event, Accordion Master Class and Concert Series, or simply the “Seminars,” as participants call it, enjoyed its 28th anniversary this year at the usual time (last weekend of July) under its creator, moderator, and active performing participant, New York accordion celebrity, composer, and unique musical thinker, Dr. William Schimmel. The event was a creative project by the Accordion Global Association and Studio Muse - William Schimmel/Micki Goodman - Benjamin Niemczyk, Production.

As always, the Seminars ran for three days and were evenly divided each day into a seminar/workshop segment and a subsequent concert. What is unusual, however, is that it has been presented virtually since 2020, instead of live at the Tenri Center, due to COVID. Nevertheless, the quality of the programming and the esprit de corps of all involved has remained as high as ever, and has even spawned some new, exciting trends.

As in all past Seminars, there was a large roster of performers and composers, offering a very diverse program of music of all ilks (popular, jazz, classical, contemporary, etc.) and discussion topics. Many of the participants have given talks, performed, and composed works for the Seminars every year since its beginning in 1995, but there is an increasing number of younger, energetic contributors with fresh ideas and creations, particularly in the area of electronic media, who have come aboard in recent years. A sampling of this year’s participants and their contributions included:

PERFORMANCES:

- Rita Davidson Barnea: four works by Eugene Ettore
- Benjamin Ickies: “We All Fall Down”
- Denise Koncelik: “1-11,” by Denise Koncelik
- Robert McMahan: “Three Tidbits” for accordion, by McMahan; “Introduction & Dance,” by David Diamond; “Prelude of the Sea,” by Carlos Surinach; (all are parts of seminars by McMahan)
- William Schimmel and wife, dancer Micki Goodman, performing “Kinesis,” by Bill Schimmel
- Bill Schimmel performing “TMI,” by Gene Pritzker; arrangement by Dan Cooper of Schubert’s “Gute Nacht;” “The Old Lady that Swallowed a Fly,” by Milica Paranosic; “Revolution Tropes,” by David First
- Godfrey Nelson and Lorraine Nelson, “Break the Rules;” improv on songs of Jerome Kern, Rodgers and Hart, and Cole Porter



PRESENTATIONS:

- Will Holshouser: Percussion Technique
- Robert McMahan: American Accordionists’ Association Commissioned Works at Intermediate Level; Discussion of McMahan’s own recent intermediate level composition, Three Tidbits
- William Schimmel: The accordion as a “homing pigeon;” clever ensemble name choices for promotion; the drone as a useful compositional device; proper facial expressions while playing different types of music; unusual gigs
- Paul Stein: Advice on Playing at Weddings (Including One’s Own!)

VIDEO COMPOSITIONS:

- Robert Goldberg: “Some Regular Trees,” for five accordions
- Mary Spencer Knapp: “Yoga Positions While Wearing Accordion;” and “Nervous Flyer”
- Main Squeeze Accordion Orchestra, video by Denise Koncelik: “Royal Twilight Crystals,” by William Schimmel
- Doug Makofka: “Introduction and Song”
- Dean Olsher: “Waiting to be Born”
- Jeanne Velonis: “Three Songs of Bellows, Buttons, and Keys,” by Melana Watras
- Discussion on arranging early music for the accordion, using John Dowland’s popular “Lachrimae” as an example
- Duet with Denise Koncelik of Kemp’s “Jig” in humorous kitchen scene
- Brief Consultations with Developing Accordionists Sari Kalin and Jack Benedetto

The next Seminars - July 2023 - will again be available to audiences around the world via the internet. The program addresses all facets of the accordion and warmly welcomes all who are interested in the accordion, whether they are amateurs, professionals, or simply engaged listeners. For more information: Accordionbill@gmail.com

La Villini hosts Accordion Nights in East Northport, NY

New York based accordionist Dominic Karcic will be featured in an evening of music and song entitled 'Some Enchanted Evening' at La Villini Restaurant on Wednesday, October 26th. In addition to accordionist Dominic Karcic, the show will feature vocalist Gina Haver.

La Villini also hosts Long Island Accordion Alliance meetings, one of which recently featured "Papa Joe" De Clemente. Joe, who lives in Queens, New York, was brought up in an Italian family environment and started playing the accordion at age nine in 1956. He was interested in playing because he used to visit his relatives, the Iorios, who manufactured accordions in NYC, as far back as 1907. Joe has performed in numerous venues and loves to entertain people. He is also a proud member of the Long Island Accordion Alliance.



Joe volunteers once a week early in the morning to assist Linda Holcomb, the music teacher at an elementary school music program at Public School 203Q in Bayside, Queens, which may be one of the only elementary schools in the five boroughs of New York City that has a student accordion band.

The school started their accordion band 15 years ago. They meet once a week at the beginning of the school day to practice various songs they will perform throughout the year. Joe volunteers his time to join the students for rehearsals and he inspires them to be better accordionists. Among the many things he does for them, he also fixes their accordions!

Joe shares his love for the accordion: "To me, music has been a language that crosses all barriers, speaking to all people and bringing joy to those who listen. The box has been my pal for over 60 years and I am glad the Lord gave me this special gift." Joe has been married to his wife, Janet, for 50 years and is the father of four kids and has 11 grandchildren. Over the years, he has shared his love of the accordion with many people all over the world who developed a love and appreciation of the instrument because of his enthusiasm.

For reservations at La Villini, please call (631) 261-6344.