

Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

February, 1998

March General Meeting

Featuring the Music of Ireland

It is said that everyone is Irish or wishes they were! The March meeting will provide a chance for all of us to fulfill that axiom. The evening's entertainment will feature the music and dances of Ireland with a special performance by *Flowing Tide*. *Flowing Tide* is a trio that includes Ricky Rackin on the English concertina and guitar, Mike Euritt on Anglo concertina and Merilee Buster on Fiddle. In addition dancers from the *Healy School of Irish Dance* accompanied by that fine Irish lad, Frank O'Montoro will delight us with their performance of authentic Irish dances.

Members Carl O'Hoeckner, Lou O'Casalnuovo and his group, *Sons of the Beach*, a sing-along by Marian Kelly and her son Paul, and the BAAC Ensemble are scheduled to also perform. During the intermission another Irish lad, Reno O'Pucci, will provide some nice background music for your listening pleasure. Master of Ceremonies for the night will be Herb O'Meier.

The evening promises to be a great night of Celtic music and dance plus a chance for our members with Irish ancestry to enjoy their moment in the spotlight...and the rest of us to be Irish for the night. The wearing of the green is optional but encouraged.

By the way, alternate Master of Ceremonies, Domenic Saso, is recovering nicely from his hip surgery...when asked how he is doing he is reported to have said that "He can't kick."



Mark Your Calendars

March 1 (Sunday). Klezmer Accordion Workshop with Nada Lewis. Study Klezmer, Gypsy and Balkan music with Nada Lewis, formerly of the Klezmerim. Limited to 10 students, not for beginners. Sheet music provided. At Boaz Accordions in North Oakland. \$15 per person, pre-registration required. To reserve a space and for more information, call Boaz Rubin, (510)653-6983.

March 2. General membership meeting. Celtic night of song, dance and refreshments. 7:00pm, Eucalyptus and 22nd Ave., San Francisco (North of Stonestown Shopping Center).

March 10 (and every second Tuesday). Meeting of the Golden State Accordion-Aires. 7:00pm. Pietro's No.2. 679 Merchant St. Vacaville. Ca.

March 11 (Wednesday). 7:30pm. BAAC Board Meeting at Ed Massolo's home at 612 Lassen in So. San Francisco. Guests welcome.

March 16 (and every third Monday). Meeting of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods. 7:00pm. Volpi's in Petaluma.

March 20-22. Texas Accordion Association Convention, Plano, Texas. Call Norman Seaton, (972)-270-3791.

March 28-29. Nick Ariondo performing with the Orchestra Sonoma. 8:00pm

Cont. page 2

Calendar cont. from page 1

on the 28th and 2:30pm on the 29th. At the Spreckles Performing Arts Center, 5409 Snyder Lane. Take Rohnert Park Expresswy-2 miles east off 101. Auditorium will be on the right at the corner of Snyder. Box Office Tues.-Sat. 12-5. (707)584-1700.

April 6. General Membership Meeting. The theme is "April in Paris". Bring a desert to share with your fellow members.

April 26. Ensemble Accordion Workshop For Beginners from 2:30-4:30pm at Boaz Accordions in Oakland, led by Henri Ducharme, professional accordionist and educator, leads beginners workshop. Includes sheet music; bring your own accordion and music stand. Limited to 10 students. \$15 advance, \$20 at the door. Register early to assure a spot and have music mailed to you ahead of time. For more info or to register, call Boaz Rubin at (510)653-6983.

May 4. General Membership Meeting. Featuring the ladies of our club.

June 1. General Membership Meeting. The theme is "Family Night".

June 19-21. CAPA (Closet Accordion Players of America) convention in Denver. Contact CAPA, 305 W. Magnolia, S. 398, Fort Collins, Co 80525.

July 20-24. Galla Rini Accordion Camp @ Oceanside, California. Contact Ellen Bonica, Accordion World, 12672 S.E. Stark Street, Portland, Or. 97233.

BAAC Ensemble practice first and third Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Frank Montoro (650)574-4757 for additional information.

BAAC Fun Band practice fourth Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00p.-9:00pm. Contact Tom Cordoni @ 415-333-5625 for more information.

Beginners Support Groups/Bands

East Bay 510-843-9958

San Francisco 415-673-8835

South Bay 408-258-1258

Please send Calendar Information to your Editor, using the address on the last page.

Thank you.

February Meeting

page 2

by Bob Berta

The February meeting opened with Val Kieser performing on her button box. She played three tunes which were all written by our own Joe Smiell. The first was written especially for Val (wow, what an honor!) and was titled *Landler for Val*. This was followed by *Bavarian Landler* and *Goldgruber Polka*. A special thanks to Val for stepping up at the last moment to provide an opening act for our concert.

The meeting provided an opportunity to hear French sensation, Jean-Louis Noton in concert. Last month's BAAC newsletter provided a biography of this extraordinary musician. But it quickly became apparent, as the evening wore on, that here was a musician who lived life to the fullest. Just some of his accomplishments include climbing a Swiss mountain with his accordion strapped on (and was so noted in the Guinness Book of Records), owning his own clothing company in Africa and being an expert in electronics and computers. He was instrumental in the development of the Cavagnolo reedless accordion he played along with the wireless MIDI transmitter.

Virtuoso bayanist, Peter Soave, introduced the artist and helped to bridge the language barrier. Jean-Louis walked onto stage playing his chromatic, 4 row accordion which proved to be a most unique accordion. This instrument will be discussed in more detail later in this article but suffice to say that Jean-Louis is a showman of extraordinary ability. The audience noted his unusual clothing, and upon questioning he revealed that he designs clothing and has his own manufacturing company in Africa. The pattern on the clothing was quite unique and certainly reminded me of African fabric prints I have seen before.

Jean-Louis proceeded to perform a wide selection of music including among others, various ethnic dance numbers, classic music, some great Argentine Tango, and of course French tunes. He included a couple of pop tunes, one by Santana complete with pitch bend on the "electric guitar" rifts and a Elton John selection that sounded like Elton was there on stage. At the end of his concert he performed a great western number complete with sound effects including the "shoot-out".

Jean-Louis performed part of his program live and the rest with multiple parts added via a sequencer, a device that allows one to prerecord all the parts of an ensemble including percussion and play them back at the same time as one performs live an additional part...sort of a Karaoke machine type effect. He was quite a master of his accordion allowing for a seamless performance that left everyone in awe of what incredible sounds he derived from his reedless accordion.

cont. page 3



Jean-Louis Noton



Doesn't Everyone Climb a Mountain With Their Accordion?

Since Jean-Louis speaks very little English, his friend Peter Soave offered to interpret and describe what was going on and the various numbers he performed. A special thanks to Peter for making the concert so great and providing answers to the questions about how Jean-Louis was doing what he was doing.

Evidently Jean-Louis is a wine aficionado and part way through his performance a bottle of wine was opened on stage and he

he toasted the audience. Peter mentioned that Jean-Louis has a wine cellar with over 3,000 bottles of wine in it! Evidently he travels all over the world with cases of wine and his accordion. Sounds like a great way to travel to me!



Peter and Jean-Louis

The following evening about 25 BAAC members joined Peter Soave and Jean-Louis for a combination workshop and demo of the reedless accordion used in the previous night's concert. Many wondered if Peter's workshop would be over their heads but happily Peter provided one of the best workshops I have attended. He spent quite bit of time dealing with sound production. He lectured and demonstrated how to improve the tone of your playing, how to make your playing more musical and used students from the workshop to play their accordion in very simple exercises and put into practice the techniques he discussed. In addition he discussed keyboard touches and bellows technics and answered many questions on a range of topics from the workshop participants.

After the workshop, Peter and Jean-Louis demonstrated the two Cavagnolo accordions they



Some of the Workshop Participants

had on hand...one piano and one 4 row chromatic. The accordions are unique in that they have NO reeds of their own. Rather they come with a sound module which contains the sampled sounds of 128 different accordion sounds ranging

from the finest dual tone chambers, musette to bandoneon and just about every accordion sound you have ever heard...plus some new



Peter Shows Val Kieser How to Play a Chromatic Accordion

ones. The sound was quite remarkable and a very big feature is that the accordions only weigh 14 lbs.! The line includes your choice of a full 41 key piano or 4 row chromatic keyboard (C system) that come standard with a converter that allows for stradella bass, or two different free bass layouts! I understand that other systems like a diatonic button box is in the works and the chromatic is also available in 3 or 5 row. The non accordion sounds can be supplied by any standard MIDI sound module such as the Roland he was using. The thing that separates this accordion from many other accordions is a very effective bellows dynamics. While it has a "bellows" it is not used for air but rather for dynamics by exerting varying pressure on the bellows. Several members tried the two accordions out and Peter Soave performed a couple of numbers with both of them.. I had a chance to try it myself and thought the system had quite good bellows dynamics. An additional item of interest was that the unit can be played completely wireless via a transmitter which allows the artist to walk around the room at will. While during the concert and demo a large amount of sound gear was used, all you would need is the accordion, the sound module which is the size of a cigar box and a portable keyboard amp. Since there are no reeds in the accordion it is incapable of providing any sound without an amplifier.

All in all a most interesting concert, workshop and demonstration! See you at the March meeting which is featuring the music and dance of Ireland.

Membership Lists

Frank Montoro will have membership lists available at the March membership meeting for \$1.00. If people who don't attend want one, they can mail \$1.00 to Frank at 1448 Tarrytown, San Mateo, 94402.

New Members

We have been seeing an increase in new faces at BAAC in the last few months. Following are some of the newest members and the cities they live in.

Bjork Stig	Oakland	Robin Lerch	Belmont
Arielle Bellows	San Carlos	Don Lynch	San Francisco
Sarah Caves	San Carlos	Bob Rossi	Los Altos
Annie Engberg	San Carlos	Lauren Yapp	Woodside
Janet Seider Frishberg	Bishop	Steve Albini	Novato
Yvonne Chu White	San Francisco	Ross Bogert	Larkspur
Douglas Collins	Oakland	Herman Flores	Pacifica
Ron Giannini	Pacifica	Igor Grodzinsk	San Francisco
Nadia Kozned	Belmont	William Tapogna	San Jose
Kristofer Nelson	Rohnert Park	Christina Dalton	Los Angeles
Jane L. Sommerhaus	San Francisco	Eric/Irma Jacobson	Daly City
Betty Pollack	San Carlos	Therese Treuenfels	San Bruno



New Newsletter Column

Tell us about your upcoming performances

Are you a professional accordionist or a semi-pro who plays out? It would be great if your fellow club members knew where you will be playing. In our efforts to provide a service both to our performing artists and to our members we would like to list some of your upcoming gigs.

Please forward a listing of your upcoming gigs to your friendly editor at the address shown on the back page of this newsletter. Note that we are requesting listings only and will not print lengthy self promotional articles. You should include the address of the establishment, the day and nights when you appear, the type of music, others in your group if a band and whether the establishment allows dancing.

If our members are going to be spending a night on the town it would be great if they could also show their support of the accordion by visiting an establishment or venue which shows their good taste by booking an accordionist to entertain the patrons. And of course our members will make a point of congratulating the establishment for having such discriminating taste in providing accordion music!

Also...when our members are traveling around California and find an establishment that features accordion music please inform the editor so we can help our members plan a visit when they are visiting those distant cities. Let's show our support for the accordion!



Community Service Program

The following members volunteered their services at convalescent hospitals, senior centers and schools during the month of January: James Firpo, Walter and Teri Traverso, Armondo Quaglia, Jeanne McClelland, Mike Zampecini, Nora Mazzara, Lynn Ewing and Frank Montoro.

Our list of volunteers is growing. Please let us know at our February membership meeting if you played during February or call Frank Montoro. It is important that we document our service to our community as part of our tax exempt status.

If you are interested in volunteering your services, let Frank know and he will make arrangements for you. (650)574-4757

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Contact Phone #s for Officers :

Pres. Marian Kelly	(650)854-1890
Vice Pres. Joe Smiell	(510)832-6938
Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook	(650)591-3009
Record. Sect. Val Kieser	(510)531-4836

In The Works

by Mary-Alice Eldon

El Nino pounded the Peninsula but about 100 people came to the February BAAC meeting to witness Jean-Louis Noton's colorful presentation of the reedless accordion. And approximately 25 people attended the technic workshop the following evening with Peter Soave as the teacher. Along with individualized instruction in phrasing, smooth finger movement and bellows control, they learned about this unique instrument from both Peter and Jean-Louis. Thank you Marian Kelly for making this all possible.

Looking ahead, our March 2nd BAAC Celtic Night promises to be a celebration of Irish music, song and dance. Our talented members will also be playing other music we all enjoy. Something for everyone is our aim. Remember that *April in Paris*, *May Ladies Night*, *June Family Night* are in the works Whatever you would like to play will be great but we need to hear from you.

There are members who are positively addicted to playing. Some of them refer to their scheduled rehearsal times as their "accordion fix". Both groups have the wonderful good fortune to have Joe Smiell as conductor which puts them in the win-win position of having a good time and developing musicianship. By the way, the BAAC Ensemble has openings. Treat yourself to a treat and join.

See you at the March 2nd Meeting. You will be wearing green, sipping coffee with Irish cake while Reno Pucci serenades you at intermission. Soon the accordions, concertinas, fiddle, the songs and dance will be heard again. Sure twill be a little bit of heaven here on earth.



Accordions Featured on American Music Awards

by Bob Berta

The big event of the year, in the music industry, is the American Music Awards presentation. This is the equivalent of the Oscars for musicians. The annual telecast was on Monday, January 27th. My teenage daughter was watching it and ran in excitedly telling me that they announced early in the show that T.D.A. (Those Damn Accordions) would be featured later in the 3 hour broadcast.

Fully expecting a brief flash of glory (and perhaps some accordion jokes), I didn't expect much. Wow...what a surprise! Near the climatic end of the show they brought the group out to perform in a great set. And to make it even more amazing I saw Dick Contino, Frankie Yankovich and Drew Carey playing along with the group of the T.D.A. regulars. While Drew didn't really play his accordion it wasn't because he didn't know how...evidently he is an enthusiastic accordionist who "sat it out" since he didn't get a chance to practice the tunes. And to make the whole thing great...they were really treated right. No accordion jokes and the enthusiastic audience responded with appreciative loud applause.

I understand that one of the T.D.A. members mentioned she was looking for a new accordion and was taken on a visit to a local accordion store by Drew Carey himself! So a special thanks to T.D.A., Contino, Yankovich and Carey for exposing a whole new generation to the delights of our beloved instrument.



February Board Meeting Synopsis

- ◆ Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook reported January income of \$614, expenses of \$779, and ending bank balances totalling \$10,089.
- ◆ It was decided that BAAC as a club would not participate in the San Mateo Festa Italiana, The Making Waves event in San Francisco, or the Jack London Square event in Oakland. Announcement will be made of these events in the newsletter, however, and members are encouraged to participate.
- ◆ The Membership Committee will have a list of current members available for distribution at the March meeting. We will ask for \$1.00 payment to defray costs. They will also mail lists. (See article in this newsletter).
- ◆ At general meetings, tables to hold articles for sale or display will be set up on the right side of the hall as you come in, rather than on the left. Food tables will still be set up on the left, near the kitchen.
- ◆ Additional expense of \$430/year for ongoing maintenance of BAAC's WEB site, spearheaded by Peter Adler, was approved.



Accordion to Boaz

Does your Accordion Smell Funny?

by Boaz Rubin

Moist Accordions

"Still Squeezin" e-mailed me to ask about the dreaded musty smell.

He writes, "I have a little 12 bass that had a light musty smell to it when I got it about a week ago." He describes his attempts to eliminate the smell by setting the accordion near a dish of baking soda, putting it in a bag with a car air freshener, and cleaning the outside with glass cleaner. While he testified to some progress he wanted to know what other suggestions I might have.

Congratulations Squeezin on your resourcefulness in coming up with common sense solutions that can only help and at the very worst can't do any damage. The only thing that I would add to your list is to play the accordion and move air through it. An accordion that smells musty has been badly stored. The musty smell is caused by stale moist air which encourages mildew and rust to form inside. It is important to pump this moisture out of the accordion (by playing it) before it does more damage.

As a rule, one should always sniff a used accordion before buying it. If it smells musty there is likely to be damage inside and the accordion is a risky buy. Fortunately, Squeezin tells me that his little accordion seems to be fully recovered and that his daughter is enthusiastically squeezing away at Squeezin's squeeze box.

Wet Tunings

Another reader phoned with a follow-up question to my column in the December issue. I had written about wet and dry tuning and she wanted to know what the difference was. Tuning can be something of a dry subject, if you'll excuse the pun, so I'll try to be brief.

Most accordions have two or more sets of reeds on the right hand side. In general each set of reeds will fall into one of four categories: bassoon, clarinet, piccolo and flute. The bassoon is the lowest common set of reeds. The clarinet is a middle set of reeds tuned one octave up from the bassoon. The highest set of reeds is the piccolo, tuned one octave higher than the clarinet and two octaves higher than the bassoon. Some accordions have a second set of middle reeds, in the same octave range as the clarinet. This set of reeds is called the flute. If the flute is tuned slightly higher than the clarinet then the result, when the two sets of reeds are heard together, will be a tremolo effect caused by sound wave interference. This tremolo effect is called wet tuning. If, on the other hand, there is no flute, or the flute is tuned to the exact same pitch as the clarinet so that there is no tremolo effect, the accordion is said to be dry tuned. Switches that would

commonly sound wet on a wet tuned accordion are the violin, accordion, mussete, and master.

Buyers' tip:

Beware of accordions that smell musty, and also suspect accordions that have several notes that are wildly out of tune. The cause in either case is likely to be rust on the reeds. When the rust is bad enough to send several reeds badly out of tune it is likely to be extensive - and therefore expensive to repair. Once rust has set in, reeds will continue to go further out of tune and the only real fix is to replace them or laboriously clean them. And playing an out-of-tune accordion will de-tune your musical ear... more on this later.

An Elephant Sat on My Accordion....send your funny and tragic accordion disaster stories and accordion jokes to Boaz, care of the BAAC newsletter or by e-mail to schmatte@well.com.

We will print (and moralize about) the best ones in this space.

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Correction

In the February issue meeting review Dover Collins was incorrectly listed as a student of Lou Soper, he is a student of Bart Beninco.

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Calling All Artists

The BAAC board is considering doing a new club T-shirt. We want to do a gorgeous one and would welcome any artwork suggestions. And if you have any ideas what the T-shirt should look like please contact any board member.

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--Barbara Ann Barnett

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President's Message

by Marian Kelly

Dear Soggy Members and Friends,

We Bay Area folk have just spent a challenging week coping with excessive rain, water invading living areas, mudslides, power outages, and many such reminders that Winter is still very much with us. Personally, I've had a mud slide which came within a few inches of the house, but Bob Smith's story is the topper so far. Bob lives next to San Francisquito Creek in Palo Alto, and found early on the morning of February 3rd that the Creek was no longer next to him and Lois, but rather had entered his home, uninvited. Accordions and music were among the items floating in the garage. Carpet and furniture was ruined. Several generous Club members have offered help. That's a heart-warming by-product of the rapport we develop when sharing our music with one another. I very much hope that most of the rest of you have been relatively unaffected by El Nino, that your homes are now dry and safe.

We held our February General Meeting, with our fascinating guest, Jean-Louis Noton, the prior evening, when the rain, wind, and lightening were pounding on the windows of Donworth Hall, and driving to and from the meeting was very scary. We knew the attendance would be impacted, because obviously, many people would choose not to brave the heavy wind and rain. But you were wonderful again, as more than a hundred of you attended and heard and enjoyed. Several of us gave thanks for our loyal members, both publicly and privately. None of us could recall a BAAC meeting being held under such challenging circumstances, and we hope it's many moons before it happens again!

Sad news greeted us that evening. Frank Panacci's wife, Donna, had passed away that morning after a 1 1/2 year bout with cancer. Donna was everybody's friend; she had, along with Isabel Massolo, handled the coffee and drinks bar at the general meetings since we began holding meetings at Donworth. Her diagnosis, after the '96 Cotati Festival, surprised everyone because she was so healthy and so relatively young. She maintained her great spirit throughout various medical treatments, spurred on by the thought that the 49'ers were actually going to do it this year! I'm sure Frank would appreciate a card or phone call. He's at 119 Riverton, San Francisco, 94132. Telephone (415)731-1039. BAAC will make a contribution to the Hospice facility which helped Donna so very much in these last few months. They are the Health Plan Hospice, 333 Gellert Blvd., Daly City 94015.

And on a very different note you will be interested to hear that our friend, Peter Di Bono, was the accordionist with the San Jose Symphony the weekend of Feb. 6th and 7th. The piece was Dances from *The Dream of Valentino* by Dominick Argento, which is about the life of movie matinee idol, Rudolph Valentino. Argento has written many operas, and received the 1975 Pulitzer Prize in Music. This

piece featured the accordion because the composer felt that the sound called up a rich nostalgia for the bygone era of Valentino. Peter was seated just to the left of the conductor, Theo Alcantara, in front of the first violins. Most of his playing was solo, with a large quiet orchestra behind him, and a conductor conducting only Peter. At the end, the conductor had him stand and bow, as he would with any guest, then walked offstage with Peter and returned with him, for another bow. Very impressive!!! Walking around at intermission, we could hear lots of approving conversations about the accordion part. Great job, Peter. This is what it's all about!

Your Board is talking about a revamped picnic at a new site this year. The tentative date is September 20th, and the locale is in the Oakland Hills. We have a small Picnic Committee ready to go, but we could use both ideas and planning help. We'd like to know what kind of picnic YOU would like, what activities, and how you'd like it structured. Please phone any Board Member with your thoughts and ideas.

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**Peter Writes To The Editor
About His Concert
With the San Jose Symphony**

by Peter Di Bono

What a day last Saturday was. At 2:30 pm I played classical music in a string trio at Santa Clara Mission for a wedding ceremony; than played "society background" for the reception cocktails; then down and dirty Italian peasant music during the dinner; then the symphony concert; and finally, piano with a jazz quintet. I slept like a stone that night.

It is impossible to describe how high I was after the concert performance. I've never been that exhilarated. It took hours to come down! I loved every minute of it, but am happy the week is over, and I can rest 'til Saturday, Valentines Day, when I will be in the Crown Room of the Fairmont Hotel. I play all of the major holidays in the Crown Room.

FOR SALE

Three accordions for sale. 2- 120 bass and 1-80 bass. All in excellent condition including cases. Reasonably priced. Call (408)296-6123.

One accordion for sale. Iorio Syntara MIDI Accordion 4/5 reeds, 120 bass. \$1800. Call (408)297-4558.

To join BAAC send a check for \$25 to:
BAAC
31 Aliso Way
Portola Valley, Calif. 94028.

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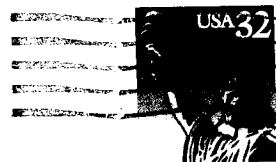
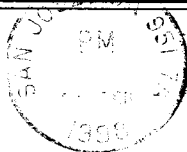
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Co-Conductor

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If you would like to play at a meeting contact Ed Massolo at (650)589-8409