

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**SAN FRANCISCO**

**BAY AREA ACCORDION CLUB**

Editors: Marian Kelly  
Dominic Palmisano

## *OFFICIAL INSTRUMENT?? YES!!!*

Tom Torriglia, considered the father of the accordion renaissance hereabouts, realized a fond wish last month at the Anchorage Accordion Festival. The Honorable Willie B. Kennedy, San Francisco Supervisor, presented to Tom, the proclamation naming the accordion THE OFFICIAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT for the CITY and COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

You recall the controversy surrounding this issue two and one-half years ago. After gathering many signatures in favor of the resolution, Tom obtained Supervisor Kennedy's support. Mrs. Kennedy introduced the measure to The Board of Supervisors which, after much discussion, passed it. Then mayor, Art Agnos, preferring the violin, withheld his approval, instead sending the matter to the Court of Historical Revue for a ruling. This august body recommended "no pass". The matter was dropped by the local media, and everyone thought the issue had gone to "proclamation heaven".

### *MARK YOUR CALENDARS*

**November 18** Wednesday. BAAC Board Meeting at Frank Montoro's.

**November 29 – December 1** Sands International Dance Festival, Las Vegas, Nevada with Frankie Yankovic.

**December 7th**, Monday. Bay Area Accordion Club's December General Meeting, sounds like a busy party at press time. Hot hors d'oeuvres will probably be served, and we are seeking a Santa. Featured music includes the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble, Don Nurisso, Lou Casalnuovo, and Vince Cirelli and his All Stars.

**January 22-25, 1993** Sixth annual Valley of the Sun Polka Festival, Mesa, AZ. 1-800-626-6686, 1-602-237-4024.

**January 22, 1993**, Leo Aquino in a solo concert for the Valley Concert Society, Abbey Arts Centre, Abbotsford, BC.

**Enter Lady Luck:** Six weeks ago one of our members, seeking some free publicity for the accordion, tried to restart the campaign. Upon calling Supervisor Kennedy's office to learn how to resurrect the issue, this member was informed that the proclamation had, in fact, passed, and that the accordion is, and has been, the official instrument of San Francisco for over two years. It was explained: when a mayor refuses to sign legislation and returns it without a formal veto, the matter automatically becomes law ten days after passage by the Board. This is why no mayoral signature appears on the document. When this information was relayed to Tom, his reaction can only be described as - celestial shock.

The document is a delight to read. Dated April 23, 1990, the resolution proclaims:

"WHEREAS, the piano accordion was first manufactured in the United States in San Francisco by Finau Piatanesi in 1907; and

WHEREAS, Finau Piatanesi was awarded medals for craftsmanship in a musical instrument at the 1915 World's Fair; and

WHEREAS, The first all accordion band, "The Accordion Club" started in San Francisco in 1915, and today's foremost all accordion band, "Those Dam Accordions!" is also comprised of San Franciscans; and

WHEREAS, Signatures have been gathered to have the accordion declared the official instrument of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Dick Contino, the foremost accordionist in the world today studied and began his career in San Francisco; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors hereby memorializes the Mayor to proclaim the piano accordion the official instrument of the City."

Accordionists everywhere - but especially in San Francisco - are deeply indebted to Tom for his tireless effort in behalf of our favorite instrument. It is even fair to say, the Bay Area Accordion Club, an off-shoot of those hearings two and one-half years ago, might never have come into existence without Tom's inspired vision and perseverance.

## November General Meeting

Your editors are testing a new reporting style whereby we do not try to elaborate on either the musical or business portions of the general meeting; instead we are using a pseudo-outline format. Let us know what you think.

### I. Non-musical items:

A. President **Peter Di Bono** announced that the Board of Directors has selected **Tom Torriglia** to fill the Board seat vacated by **Paul Pasquali**.

B. Members were encouraged to contact **Marian Kelly** (415-854-1896) to let her know where they are performing so that she can include the information in this newsletter.

C. We all sang "Happy Birthday" to **José (Domenic Saso)**. (Yes, this was truly non-musical.)

### II, The musical program M.C.'d by **Domenic Saso**:

A. **Dan Cooper**, our long time friend, played and sang "Paradise" and "Wishing/When You Wish Upon a Star".

B. **Casey Callaghan**, age 10, **Vince's** student, attended with his family and

played "Marianna Waltz", "Mexican Hat Dance", and an Irish Reel on the basses only.

C. **Bob Smith**, wearing a gorgeous flashy blue shirt, played "La Spagnola" and "Czardas".

D. **Salvadore Bartimioli**, new to our group, introduced himself by playing "Sorrento", "O Solo Mio", and "Arieviderci Roma".

E. **Tom Cordoni** picked up the tempo beautifully with "Danny Boy", "The Wearing of the Green", and "Zorba the Greek".

F. **Marian Kelly** impressed everyone with **Joe Morelli's** "Samba Baby", then "Francapa" by **Astor Piazzola**, and **Sibelius's** "Valse Triste".

G. **John Molinari, Jr.** and **Joe Smiell** ended the evening with a wonderfully nostalgic slide presentation mostly of **John's** unforgettable **Dad**. **John's** commentary was warm, caring, and clearly from his heart, and we all appreciated his willingness to share his family with us.

## Two New Accordion Tapes

Listening to **Henry Doktorski's** newly issued tape, *Carols for Christmas*, was a delightful surprise for me. Perhaps I'm tired of hearing the same Christmas tunes every year, and certainly I am not accustomed to well-played accordion Christmas music. For whatever reasons, this tape greatly exceeded my expectations.

**Henry Doktorski** plays a free bass Titano accordion with a 55 note bass range, which he uses most effectively. The arrangements are the performer's adaptations of **Bill Palmer's** (of **Palmer and Hughes**) book "Christmas Holiday" plus additional arrangements in sonata form from **Dr. Palmer**. **Mr Doktorski** expanded some of **Dr. Palmer's** scores, added some of his own, and orchestrated the pieces for instruments which, he says, "I had at my disposal". Those instruments include a string quartet, harpsichord, electric piano, harp, oboe, flute, clarinet, and various percussion instruments.

We are treated to lovely, relatively simple arrangements such as **Mr. Doktorski** alone in "Angels We Have Heard on High", or theme and variations of the old "English Coventry Carol", which beautifully demonstrates musical possibilities which the free bass instrument provides. Equally beguiling are orchestrations of "What Child is This?" (Greensleeves) and "Away in a Manger" for accordion and harp. Far more complex are arrangements of "Twelve Days of Christmas" for accordion, string quartet, harpsichord, oboe, flute, glockenspiel, tubular bells, clarinet, harp, bassoon, french horn, timpani; and a delightfully intricate "Jingle Bells" with string octet and various percussion.

For these and seven other imaginative orchestrations, send \$10.95 postage included to **Mr. Doktorski** at 295-B Palace Road, Moundsville WV 26041.

For lower prices on three or more tapes, phone the performer at 304-845-0467.

## Synopsis of Board Meeting, October, 1992

- The Board had a good discussion of BAAC's program of playing in local grade schools. We agreed that we should play this year in two districts rather than just San Francisco. We will develop a list of persons willing to volunteer their playing services. At the same time, we will develop a list of teachers so that we can refer interested students.

- The Board agreed on four potential candidates for the board vacancy created when **Paul Pasquali** left, and upon the order in which they will be asked to take **Paul's** place. **Peter** will recruit someone.

- Membership is now 216, higher than ever before.

- The Cotati festival was revisited; it was agreed that BAAC's booth was quite successful and that we wish to do something similar next year. We will, however, stock a better variety of tapes. It was also agreed that we will monitor next year's jam tent a little more, since its great popularity created a few problems.

- The Treasurer reports \$4592. in the checking account and \$1198 in savings.

- The Board discussed pros and cons of moving the location of our general meeting. Two important "pros" at the House of Parties are the cost and the central location. We will continue to pursue the subject.

Another new tape is from **Othmar Steubler** a young, up-and-coming local accordionist who has put together a trio of very competent musicians. **John Erikson** and **Ed McClary** handle vibes, marimba, guitar, harmonica, and percussion, while **Othmar** plays accordion and vocalizes. The result is highly listenable, as those who heard this group at our October general meeting testified by their prolonged applause.

The trio's tape, aptly named The World Accordion to Othmar is available. The tape includes 12 familiar standards, and features many of the arrangements we



# CONDUCTOR'S COLUMN

Writing this article is always a challenge – so much to talk about, so many things going on. The November meeting looked like another record attendance, guess is about 130. The entertainment was lively, the audience more so, and hearing young Casey Callahan, Vince Cirelli's aspiring student, was cause to celebrate. It is Casey's generation that will carry the message of the accordion into the next century, and we ought to dedicate ourselves to encourage and support these young players whenever possible. I was especially impressed with the bass solo flawlessly executed by Casey, and only ten years old!

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The Exploratorium presented a concert a few weeks back featuring multi-cultural music on many different types of accordions. One of the performers played six different concertina types of accordions; another played very baroque, 16th century music, also on a concertina. The exciting rhythms of Latin America were represented, and I finally got to hear "Norteno" music, a hybrid of the polka with a Latin beat. Steve Shen played authentic Chinese, pentatonic music, and even sang several numbers. Couldn't understand a word, but it was very passionate, whatever it was. I would like to have some of these performers at one of our meetings to demonstrate these different styles for us. Did you

## Othmar's Tape, cont.

heard in October, including a cabaret medley, "Singin' in the Rain", "Brazil", "Quando Quando", "Besame Mucho", "I Wish You Love", "Tico Tico", and "Pennsylvania Polka".

Many of the selections are characterized by a strong rhythmic beat or by Othmar's very pleasant vocal, or both. I especially enjoyed the lovely musette sound in "Under the Bridges of Paris" and the imaginative arrangement of "Brazil". All of the arrangements include a prominent accordion, and are, only partly for that reason, delightfully listenable.

To support this fine local fellow, send \$10. to Othmar Steubler, 450 Sutter St., Suite 1723, San Francisco 94108. Or phone him at 415-398-6013.

M. Kelly

know that accordions are used in ceremonial rites in tribal Africa? Neither did I. Very interesting stuff.

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The second annual San Francisco International Accordion Festival at the Anchorage Shopping Center was really spirited, and featured Those Darn Accordions! and Jim Boggio's Sonoma Swamp Dogs. Joe Smiell reports that Ted Varga is recuperating and is expected back in the straps before long. Recently learned that Wenzel Rasmussen is also recovering from a bout with the saw bones. Looking forward to seeing Ted and Wenzel at the Club, soon!

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The letter to the editor in the October newsletter concerning our meeting place is something to think about. We are quickly outgrowing our present facility, and a change might be inevitable in any event. I would like to hear from you regarding this issue, especially some suggestions for alternative meeting places to accommodate our growing membership.

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All responses concerning the accordion-related comments that appear regularly in the Chronicle should be sent to Mr. Herb Caen, c/o The San Francisco Chronicle, 901 Mission St., San Francisco 94103. Mr Caen would probably like to know that our

members bring live music, free of charge, into local schools which can't afford music programs, that our Club is studying the possibility of initiating a music scholarship fund for youngsters of any instrument, and that accordionists are one of the strongest voices encouraging the youth of America to pursue the study of music no matter what the instrument chosen. Mr Caen probably doesn't realize that just a little different spin on his comments would provide welcomed help for our efforts, and that would be greatly appreciated – especially by the youngsters.

«««««»»»»»

Tom Torriglia, Those Darn Accordions! and the newest member on the Board of Directors, deserves the gratitude of accordionists everywhere – especially in San Francisco. I'm sure you read about it on the front page. Tom, the proclamation is your brainchild (even though you missed the birth), and we are all proud of your efforts. Also, Marian Kelly has a good selection of t-shirts available, and do get yourself a copy of the new tape featuring that great master, Leon Sash, which Don Nurisso has. The December meeting is shaping up to be a real winner, so set aside the first Monday, and bring along your golden voices for a fun singalong.

Happy Thanksgiving, Everyone.  
Peter Di Bono

## ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Editor:

I propose that we move our monthly BAAC meetings to another site with better acoustics and easier parking than the House of Parties. Our group has grown so large that our meeting room cannot accommodate all the people who attend and all of the music played.

The House of Parties has been very good to us, and I am not dissatisfied with their service. Perhaps if our group wants to remain there, we can propose installing acoustic tiles in the meeting room so that the sound can be improved. This would not take care of the parking problem, but maybe changing the meeting time from 7:00 -9:00 to 8:00 to 10:00 might give members a better chance to park and make the meeting on time.

If we decide to move, I think that any additional expense involved could be covered by the general fund instead of having to increase the attendance fees. But it is important to improve sound quality since music is the reason we all belong to BAAC.

I hope the board considers this and lets the membership know what they decide.

Josephine Hornbrook

# TOM'S TANTALIZING TIDBITS

## Across the Editor's Desk

Last week, a step leading out from the garden apartment where I live needed to be repaired. I don't know how to repair a stair and even if I did, I don't have the tools to do it. So who did I call? Some unknown carpenter who came and fixed the stair for a lot of money. A while ago, I suggested that the club include a questionnaire in the newsletter asking that if any members who have jobs other than playing the accordion would like to be included in a services directory please complete the form and mail it in. Then a directory could be published for all the members. I would much rather give my money to someone in the club who came and did a repair job for me than someone I don't know. There's an awful lot of us who can do a lot of different things, and I think it would be great if we could find out what each of us can do and then call on each other for our various needs. So, I ask again – how about a membership services directory?

I was very disappointed that there wasn't a great showing of club members at the S.F. Accordion Festival. The number of non-playing members I saw could be counted on one hand (Peter, Rusty, Dominic P. and Cyndi). Not one member of the club signed up to be in the Ms. Accordion (co-ed) San Francisco Pageant. Having some members in the Pageant would have given the club some great exposure and given the talent in the club one of the members probably would have won. Excuse me, am I missing something? There's an accordion club in San Francisco with over 200 members, there's an accordion festival in San Francisco, and only a handful of club members show up at the festival. I don't get it. Isn't the purpose of the club to foster the appreciation of the accordion and support its resurrection as a mainstream instrument? Well, the members of the club sure have a funny way of showing support. It's too bad that hardly anybody came to the festival. Although the skies were bleak, the music was hot. By the

way, the winner of the pageant was TDA's J. Raoul Brody.

Czech Jim Cert is in town again. Actually, I don't know if he ever left. Have you seen this guy? They don't call him the Tasmanian Devil for nothing. He sings and screams and is all over his concave-keyed accordion. The music committee should try to get him for a meeting or, better yet, watch the newspapers and go see him in a club.

Norma Fox is toying with the idea of starting an East Bay Accordion Club. If you'd be interested in talking to her about that, give her a call, during normal business hours, at 510-841-0441.

Ulrich Schmülling, the music impresario who booked TDA in Lithuania, has recently produced a 16 page newspaper about the world of accordiana. If you're interested in subscribing to this new, on-going publication, contact Ulrich at Intermusik Schmülling, Postfach 1609, 4708 Kamen, Germany. Uh, you might want to know...the paper is written entirely in German.

Some people in Monterey want to put on a museum exhibit of the accordion sometime in 1994. Great idea. I think we should do the same here. Perhaps a retrospective of the accordion in San Francisco. Your thoughts? I would try to schedule the retrospective during June, 1993, the 5th anniversary of National Accordion Awareness Month.

Why are there no accordion teachers at the San Francisco Conservatory? Perhaps the club could start a petition drive to have a teacher available to prospective students.

If you or your band is doing something new that we should all know about, or if you have any gossip or comments, drop me a line at 2269 Chestnut St., #183, San Francisco 9412

Tom Torriglia

### MORE ACCORDION PUBLICITY.....

San Francisco's Own, Herb Caen, ran this piece of accordiana at the end of his Friday, Nov. 6th column:

"My favorite Halloween card: 'What could be more horrifying than a parade of zombies roaming your neighborhood?' (Turn page.) 'They could be playing accordions.'"

Dear Mr. Di Bono:

Just a little note of appreciation for the fine job you and your staff are doing with our club (BAAC), especially the monthly newsletter.

Living in the Sacramento area, we are unable to attend the meetings, so we depend on the newsletter to keep us abreast of things. Whenever I receive it in the mail, I always sit down right away and read it cover to cover. Then my wife will usually say, "Are you finished yet? I want to read it next". Also, I remember the names of members mentioned in the newsletter – then, when I meet them at a picnic or concert, I can recall their association with our Club. The newsletter has improved with age (like most accordionists) and when talking with prospective members, I make sure they understand that the dues include this interesting and helpful newsletter. By using the classified ads, I located a concertina for a young friend who inquired of me where to purchase one.

Peter, I share your concern for the lack of younger players. I believe that study of the accordion is an excellent alternative for youth – a positive discipline and outlet for expression, instead of the host of negatives influencing today's kids.

A friend of mine who studied under Lauro Stizzo (Steve Stizzo's Dad) for seven years told me that he picked it back up after 30 years because of my enthusiasm – he is very happily re-learning his old repertoire!

It's important that the older generation of accordionists transfer their knowledge somehow – write it down and make it available or volunteer teach through the schools or music stores. (I am aware that some are already involved in the schools.) If someone has a grandchild in elementary school, perhaps the teacher will welcome an accordionist guest to play and talk about pitch, melody, harmony, etc. – expose them to the accordion at a young age!

So much to talk about when it comes to our beloved instrument. I am confident that BAAC will continue to thrive, grow, and evolve into an effective and enjoyable group – hats off to Mr. Di Bono and crew. Let us know if we can help in some way.

Tim and Pauline Tyree  
of "a.k.a. AKKORDEON"

### Recuperating....

Ted Varga, P O Box 537 Glen Ellen, 95442 707-833-2113

Wenzel Rasmussen, 375 Reichling Ave, Pacifica 94044 415-359-2550

Both have had major surgery...they would appreciate hearing from you.

## Who's Playing???

Tom Cordoni's eleventh annual dinner/dance on November 21st includes open bar, food, and dancing for \$37.50 p.p. Call Tom for info-415-333-5625.

Clyde Forsman plays every Thursday at the Cafe du Nord, 2170 Market downstairs from 7 - 9.

ANY INSTRUMENT WILL  
SOUND MUSICAL IF  
PLAYED IN A MUSICAL  
MANNER.

Anthony Galla-Rini

## NEW MEMBERS

Fred B. Anderson  
Bart Beninco  
Renate Bixby  
Harry Cannata  
Jean Diesh  
Mary Grockett  
Melba Keadle  
John Krist  
Shan Magnuson  
Mike Marotta, Sr.

We're delighted to have you with us! Please give us your ideas about our club.

## LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO LITHUANIA

On October 4, 1992, America's favorite 12 piece almost all-accordion band, Those Darn Accordions!, headed east on an historic goodwill musical tour to the Fourth Annual International Accordion Festival in Vilnius, Lithuania. The first stop on our flight from San Francisco was at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport where we were greeted by Texas Accordion Association's President, Dr. Norman Seaton and his wife, Sharon. Both TDA and the Seatons entertained passengers while waiting for connecting flights. The next stop was Warsaw, where after a three day sightseeing binge, the band took a train bound for Vilnius.

The 12-hour ride went fairly smoothly except for a three-hour layover, since the spacing of the rails in Poland is different from the spacing in Russia. Therefore, the cars had to be disengaged from the wheels, then lifted into the air while the Polish rails were removed and the Russian rails put in place, then lowered and attached to the Russian rails.

In Vilnius, we were not met by the festival organizers as promised. Luckily, one of the members had the home phone number of the organizer who was home but didn't expect the band until the following morning. After an hour waiting in the cold, the organizer and his friends arrived and drove us to the dormitory where all the performers were staying. Tired and cold, the band members sauntered off to their respective rooms only to find that not one room had heat or hot water. A shivering night was spent by all.

The next morning, three translator/guides

escorted us to the cafeteria (dubbed the House of Gruel) for breakfast. After breakfast, we immediately went back to the dorm and requested every single blanket available in anticipation of another literally freezing night. Our guides then took us on an exhausting walking tour of Vilnius that was most interesting. Vilnius is a city in contrast. On one hand, we saw the magnificence of various buildings, beautiful trees whose leaves had turned and fallen during the autumn frosts, hundreds of beautiful flowers, and even a castle. However, standing as a cruel reminder of the fight for freedom in Vilnius, we saw barricaded bridges and a memorial to those who died during the recent struggle located outside the barricaded TV station.

The next day the band gave its first performance in an auditorium located in the "Teacher's House." This building is actually a conservatory of music as well as a general education school. The audience, comprised of mostly accordion students, teachers, and accordion aficionados, all gasped when we entered. They had never seen accordion players dressed in leopard prints or in fishnets (and that was only the guys). However, the horror on their faces quickly dissipated as we went into our first polka and broad smiles appeared throughout the auditorium. Our performance was cheered heartily and for an encore we played the internationally known "Duck Dance", a song in which everyone participated.

A couple of days later the festival came to a close with short performances by al-

most all the participants. The festival performers that night included Pavel Fenjuk and Jurij Fedorov (Ukraine), Karine Fontaine (France), Viktor Novikov and Aleksandr Skljarov (Russia), Massimo Ricci (Germany), Kazys Stonkus, Eduardas Gabnys and Genadijus Savkovas (Lithuania), Neil Varley (England), the Uralskoje Trio Bajistov (Russia), Ensemble Tutti (Belorussia), the Bielefelder Akkordeonquintett (Germany) and many other performers from Poland, Spain, and Latvia.

We were asked to close the festival and performed a short program. As a finale, we chose an old Lithuanian war ballad titled Mazam Kambarely. A translator joined us on stage to sing the lyrics. Shortly, the audience rose to its feet and sang along with her. By the time the song ended, the teary-eyed members of the audience were holding hands with each other and swaying back and forth.

After the festival was over, a reception ensued where all the participants ate a vast assortment of food and raised their glasses in a toast to a very special gathering of musicians from around the world.

Upon our return to our accommodations, we were pleasantly surprised to find that the hot water had been turned on for the first time since our arrival. We all took this to be a clear signal that the promoters liked our performance. The next day we sadly left Vilnius taking with us memories of a city, country, and most especially, of a people which will last a lifetime.

To Lithuania we say, "Thank You."

Tom Torriglia

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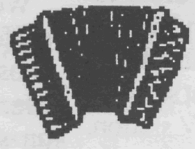
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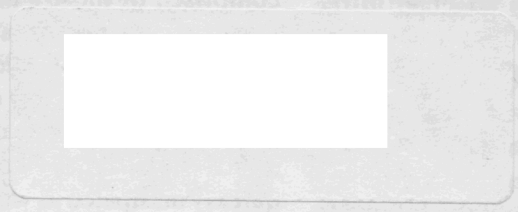
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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY  
 December 7, 1992  
 7:00PM

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 WOULD LIKE TO PLAY AT THE  
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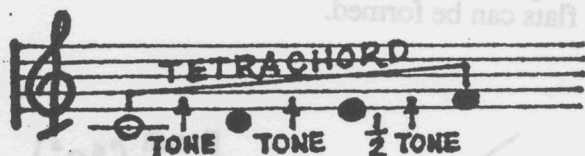
<u>Conductor</u> Peter Di Bono	<u>Co-Conductor</u> Marian Kelly	<u>Public Relations</u> Walter Traverso	<u>Banker</u> Frank Montoro	<u>Teller</u> Rusti Bartoli	<u>Scribe</u> Barb Hartley
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Ed. Note: Jim has submitted to us the first of three instructional articles which he has prepared and which he hopes will provide musical insight to some of our members. He is very interested in receiving feedback on these articles. Telephone him at 415-344-6446 with your comments.

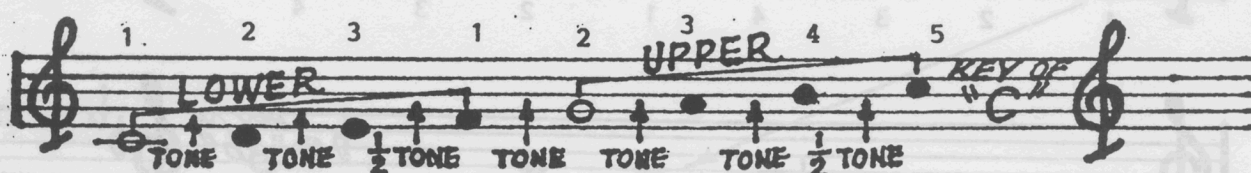
## *Tetrachords and the Major Scale*

by Jim Holliday

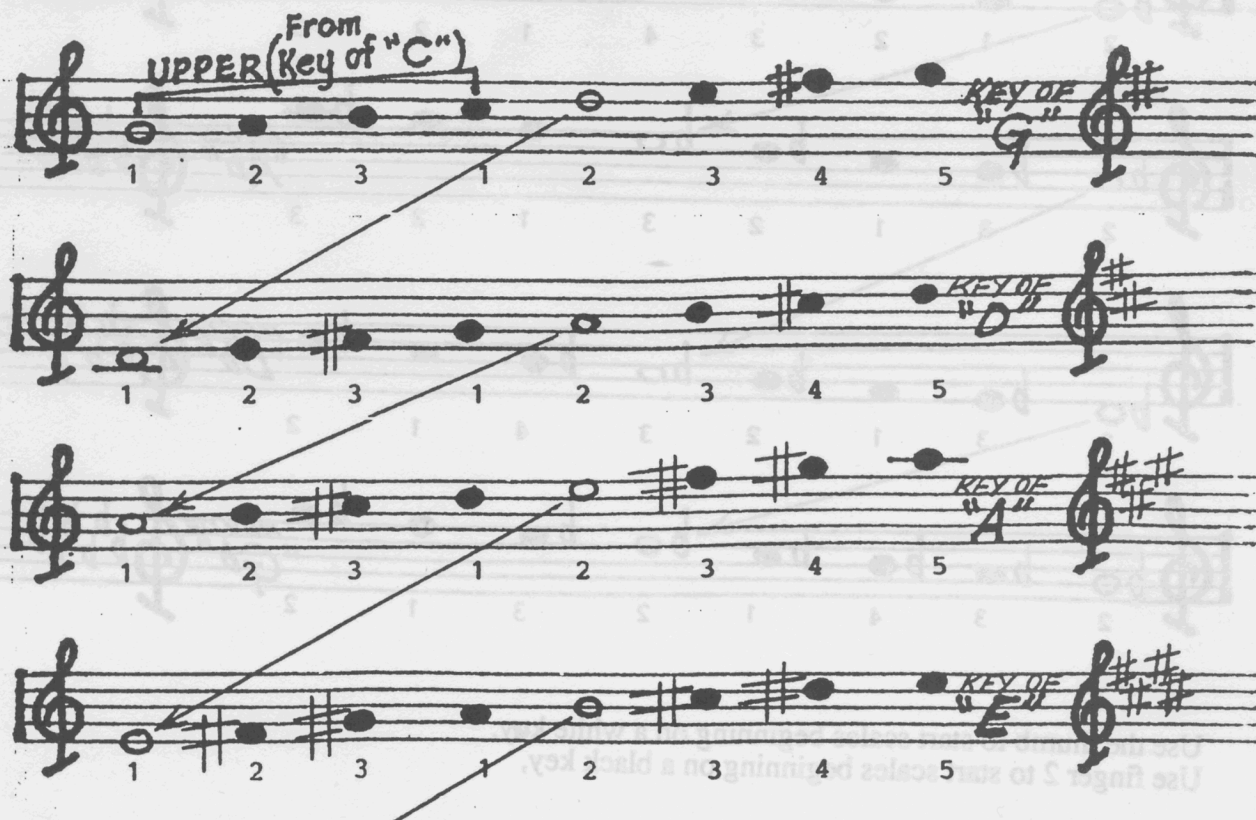
A tetrachord is a *unit* consisting of four notes separated by a whole tone, whole tone, half tone.



When two tetrachords are connected by a whole tone, a major scale is formed.



A tetrachord belongs to two different scales. It can be the lower in one scale or the upper in another. The first and last notes of a tetrachord indicate the two keys it belongs to. By using the upper tetrachord from one scale as the lower tetrachord in a new scale, all of the key signatures containing sharps can be formed.



Starting with the "C" scale, by using the lower tetrachord as the upper tetrachord in a new scale, all of the key signatures containing flats can be formed.

Use the thumb to start scales beginning on a white key.  
Use finger 2 to start scales beginning on a black key,