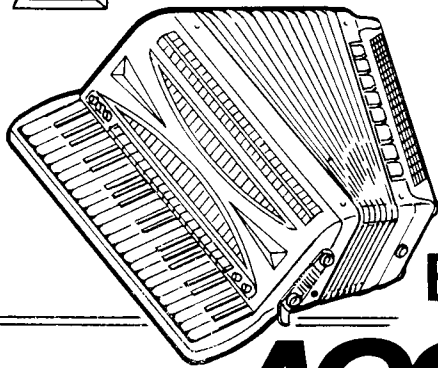


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

SEPTEMBER, 1995

Cotati Reflections — Pro and Con

by Denny Huff

It's certainly not hard to bite into the "pro" side of the '95 Cotati Accordion Festival. I loved it! It's a combination of picnic, Family Reunion and Music Festival. We like to get there early in the morning, when it's still a little cool, and set up a base camp in the center of the park. From there we spend the next eight or nine hours listening to music favorites, socializing, eating (and drinking!), and meandering around the park and town checking out the action. It's a very enjoyable weekend, and one we look forward to each year. It's not likely to become "old hat."

This year I particularly noticed the (separate) booths set up by Lou Soper, Rick Bez, and Stas Wisniach. I hope they ended up making some money, but, whether they did or not, they sure made a lot of good will for the accordion. No matter who stopped to talk, each of them took time with young and old, great and small explaining the merits of the accordion and accordion music. The same can be said of the BAAC booth, which was also popular, but it had a few more folks to draw on to "person" the booth. It was great to see so many BAAC'ers in attendance, but a special thanks goes out to

those who not only attended but who also donated time or resources in some manner to help make the Festival a big success. If you weren't a helper this year, be sure to sign up for '96.

And who could argue with the food?! I swear that my olfactory senses begin to smell those Belgian Waffles sometime around the end of July. I barely managed to restrain myself to one per day. Thai food, great sausages, and ribs were a few more of the excellent selections. We even switched to Miller Genuine Draft this year. If you can't be in Bavaria, the next best selection is Miller's.

The Jam Tent seemed to work out well again this year; at least a few folks were always in there playing. Plus, there were many spectators taking a break from the stage listening to the impromptu sessions inside and outside the tent. Not to disparage the stage acts, but some of the off stage music was better than scheduled performances. But what really pleased me was the Polka Tent. At first I was worried that it would be too far off to draw a crowd, but it was a huge success! Steve Balich and crew have done a great job playing and supporting the Festival for all

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

September 23rd, Saturday 7:30 PM. The Finnish accordion trio Pakkanaiset, three young conservatory grads and accordion teachers. San Jose State Univ. Music Concert Hall, Free Admission. Call 408-924-4773.

October 2nd., Monday. BAAC General Meeting featuring special Guest Artist Chuck Berger and the Kil, Sweden Accordion Club. See article on p. 2.

October 4th., Wednesday, 7:30. BAAC Board Meeting at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests are welcome. Call (415) 589-8409.

October 11th and 25th, second and fourth Wednesdays, 7:00 PM. BAAC Accordion Practice, House of Parties. Call Joe, 510-832-6938.

October 9th, second Monday. BAAC Fun Band Practice, 7:00 PM. Call Domenic, (415) 587-7557.

October 13th, Fri. 8P. Odile Lavault and her Baguette Quartette in concert at Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez at 23rd San Francisco.,

October 21 & 22., Sat. & Sun. to 5:30. San Francisco Accordion Festival at Anchorage Shopping Center, at the Wharf. Enter the contest for San Francisco's '95 Main Squeeze! Bob B. has details.

cont. on p. 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bob Berta

Whew...it has been really exciting and frantic as the various accordion events and festivals get into full swing. First the Cotati Accordion Festival was a tremendous success. The club sold tons of tapes and made a few dollars but our big success was the number of new members we picked up. A special thanks to all who helped out at the booth. A special thanks to Frank Montoro who gets the "Sore Butt" award for sitting in the booth both days all day long...thanks Frank.

I was pleased at the quality of the performances of the various club members who played at Cotati. Our club can be proud of the world class talent we have amongst our ranks.

Several accordion events and festivals will be coming up in the next couple of months so be sure and check the calendar

to make your plans to attend some of them.

The October general meeting promises to be an outstanding one. Chuck Berger (MIDI accordionist extraordinaire) and an accordion orchestra from Sweden will be there. The upcoming months will see even more guest artists so you can count on exciting meetings. We will be having some "special feature nights" soon. A repeat of the desert night is already planned and we are considering a "dance night". If you have any ideas for a meeting focus I would love to hear them as we will be setting a schedule of these events at the next board meeting.

As always you are invited to attend any board meeting if you would like to see what goes on or wish to bring up a topic for discussion.

Bob Berta

September Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Treasurer Algis Ratnikas reported over \$9,000 in our combined bank accounts.
- That nice, healthy balance is due to an unusually high number of people renewing their membership as well as more new members than we had anticipated. We're delighted with your vote of confidence. Thank you, all.
- Despite record membership numbers, there are still a few who have not renewed. A notice will go out in the September newsletter to each of those members stating that they must keep dues current to receive any more newsletters.
- Neither Frank was present (Montoro or Schlotter), and since the two of them had been responsible for all the nuts and bolts of our booth at Cotati, we were not able to obtain a definitive report at this meeting. However, we do know that we signed up 14 new members at our booth and that we made a profit on our tape sales of approx. \$325. A definite success.
- Chuck Berger has agreed to be our guest artist at the October meeting in exchange for motel or hotel accommodations. Bob Berta will find something suitable and will investigate whether Chuck might wish to join some of us for dinner. An extra dollar will be charged at the door that evening to defray the extra cost.
- Bob Berta has several ideas for workshops. Jim Boggio will teach one on Cajun music; Vince Cirelli will teach one on repair; Sev Garcia will teach one on stage fright. And Joe might do his button box workshop. The Board discussed when, where, and how we might structure such workshops.
- We understand that we could rent one-half of the grounds, including the gazebo, at the Elks Lodge in Palo Alto next year for our picnic for \$700. Rather than risking a picnic in an area too small for us, the Board decided to stay at Swiss Park for one more year, moving the date into July in hopes of better weather. Pres. Bob has made several recent visits to Swiss Park; he says the weather is wonderful. The cost, about \$400 total is too attractive for us to give it up so quickly.

MK

October Meeting:

Chuck Berger and the Kil (Sweden) Accordion Club!

Get ready for another **big** general meeting. On Monday, October 2nd, our monthly meeting will feature not one, but two, guest performers. Actually one individual guest and one group guest(s).

New to all of us except Ernie Lantz, who arranged to have them play for us, is a group of about 10 musicians from the Kil Sweden Accordion Club. This is their third US tour....they seem to particularly favor California! Kil (pronounced sheel) is a small city of about 15,000 near the geographical center of Sweden in the province of Varmland. Swedish cities often have accordion clubs; the Kil club is particularly accomplished. Its members are professionals in their other lives, scientists, nurses, business people. Their music is very diverse; you can expect country music, jazz, Swedish folk songs and standards. For those of you willing to try their name in Swedish, it's the Kil (sheel) Dragespel Clubben. Some of these musicians speak English; others do not. We encourage all of you to introduce yourself to these interesting visitors and help all of us make them feel welcome.

And that's not all! Chuck Berger, whom many of us have heard and seen at Cotati, is paying us his first visit. Chuck hails from Portland, having moved there about 5 years ago from Wisconsin via Colorado. He's been playing accordion since he was a wee one, not even taking time out as many of us have. Some people refer to Chuck as the master of the MIDI accordion. His music is highly listenable and danceable, and made more so by Chuck's warm, smooth, polished vocals. We'll bet that you won't want to go home.

We will charge an extra \$1.00 at the door (total \$3.00) to help defray extra costs incurred this evening.

MK

Cotati Festival Reflections, cont.

the years I have attended, and it was good to see such an enthusiastic crowd of dancers (of much more than polkas) and listeners surrounding the tent for most of the day. Great job, Steve!

There was so much good music that it's impossible to do it all justice, but I can't resist a few comments. Bellows and

of humor and music always appeal to the crowd. And when it comes to turning on the crowd, Those Darn Accordions! (TDA) really understand what it takes. Great job in firing up the crowd!! Peter Di Bono's Jazz Group sounded excellent, and I hope we get to hear them again. They fit well together and offered selections

which appealed to jazz veterans as well as to non-jazz aficionados. We were lucky to have Dick Contino appearing both days this year and, unsurprisingly, he was a big hit again. He goes beyond just playing and quickly draws the audience into the show. It

was good to see our friends from the Northwest, all of whom acquitted themselves well with the crowd. Bonnie Birch, Ken Olendorf, Chuck Berger, and Leo Aquino. And the best acts weren't always later in the day. Rick Bez and Gordon Kohl, very different but equally entertaining players, provided the early arrivals with a great start. Hopefully they'll get later slots next year.

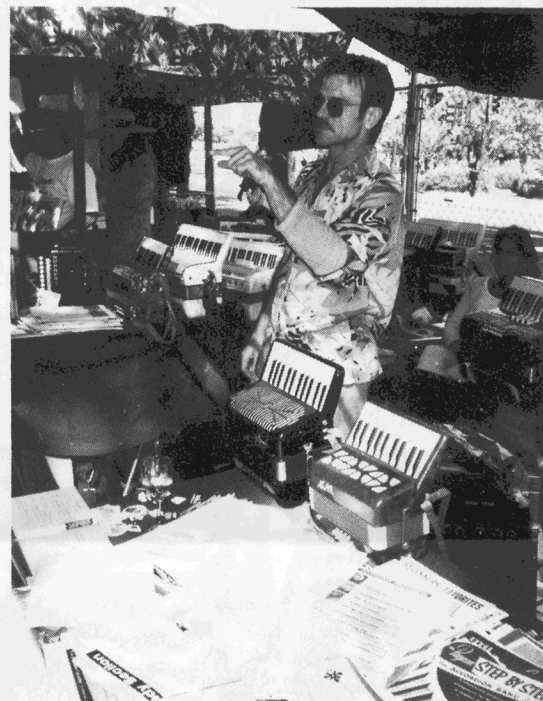
There really isn't a "con" side to something which is so enjoyable, but a few comments did surface over the weekend which maybe deserve attention. I'll ignore comments on the "mechanics" of the Festival which will probably never please



Norma Fox, Frank Schlotter

Bows! Norma Parsons not only knows how to play the accordion, but she really understands how to present it with another instrument. I thought she and Tian were great. Sourdough Slim has been a favorite of ours since we first saw him at the Sonora Christmas Festival (another good festival, by the way.) He claims not to be an accordion player, but an entertainer who uses the accordion as a prop. No matter how you slice it, his dry sense

everyone, e.g. specific location of the Jam or Polka Tents. As one looked around the crowd, one saw many people my age and older. (Not that I'm that old, you under-



Rick Bez hard at work

everyone, e.g. specific location of the Jam or Polka Tents. As one looked around the crowd, one saw many people my age and older. (Not that I'm that old, you under-



Lady of Spain-a-Ring at Cotati on Sunday

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Accordions don't play Lady of Spain - People do!

'95

KONTAK FAN CLUB

ACCORDION

TOSCA

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

We always worry just a bit whether BAAC members who are programmed to come out on the first Monday will appear when, because of a holiday, we move our meeting to the second Monday. Monday, September 11th convinced us that we needn't be concerned, that we have a wonderful, loyal group of supporters whom we can count on. We hadn't advertised any entertainment except **Frank Panacci** because we weren't sure who would play, but the program was very solid (thanks to **Mary-Alice Eldon**) and featured lots of fine players. More on that later.

Pres. **Bob Berta** made a few quick announcements, mostly related to upcoming accordion events, then he introduced **Domenic Saso**. **Mr S.** had some pretty sharp comments at first which shall not be repeated here! (At least he stays away from politics!)

First up were **Jim Firpo** and **Leon Broussal**, who seem to enjoy playing together. They treated us to an Italian waltz, *Stella Alpina*, then a German beer-drinking combination of *In Muenchen Steht Ein Hofbrauhaus* with *Du, Du Liegst Mir Im Herzen*. They followed with *Beer Barrel* and *Isle of Capri*.

Algis Ratnikas must practice a lot, because he always comes up with some new, previously untried tunes. Tonight he began with Brahms' *Hungarian Dance #6*. Then he jumped up about a century to a number from the '60s, *Some Day Soon*. Lastly, he treated us to a very pretty interpretation of *Misty*. Thanks, **Algis!**

Just before intermission **Frank Panacci** appeared on stage to lots of anticipative applause. And he certainly disappoint us! He began with one of his wife, **Donna's**, favorites, *Valencia*. We could see why she likes it so much! Then Rossini's *La Danza*, Frosini's *Hot Points*, Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours*, and, as an encore when the crowd refused to get up for intermission, *El Relicario*. Hoo Boy! Great job, **Frank!**

Rick Bez (who was a big hit at Cotati) started the second half in fine style. **Rick** has a great voice, and uses it well. He dances around the stage while he is playing and singing, and simply charmed everybody. I noted **Reno Pucci** watching **Rick** with great interest from the side. **Reno's** smile seemed to say...."Hmm, I'll bet I could do that." Anyhow, **Rick** played *Blind Man*, *Come Back to Sorrento*, *La Comparsita* (he's joining the current interest in tangos), and lastly a fine *Boogie Woogie*.

More great stuff coming. **Bart Beninco** brought along his comfy clothes and his special seat and showed us his fine musical style. **Bart's** a great player anyhow, but we know that his props certainly didn't hurt! He played *Dark Eyes*, Chabrier's *España*, a Joplin rag called *Strenuous Life*, and Leroy Anderson's *Syncopated Clock*. **Bart** plays only occasionally for us; several people weren't sure who he was. Now they know! Please play more often, **Bart**.

Lastly, **Lou Soper** and friends played some jazz. His friends were **Dick Snyder** on clarinet and **Al Simin** on bass, and it looked as if they have a good time together. They swung into *What Is This Thing Called Love*, then into *Begin the Beguine* and later *Moonglow*. Feet were tapping all over the room and lots of heads were moving back and forth in tempo. Then they brought on **Don Nurisso**, who joined the trio for *Satin Doll* and *Blusette*. Nice work, guys. Everybody really enjoyed it.. MK

August 5, 1995

Dear Editor:

On Sunday, July 30th, my wife Carol and I were treated to an unforgettable evening of accordion performances by some of Chicago's finest! Lee Sash, the widow of jazz-great Leon Sash, has been our friend for several years, and we usually visit with her when we are in Chicago.

After I told her we were coming, she invited several local accordionists to dinner at Monastero's, a fine Italian restaurant. The owner, Joe Monastero, sings Italian songs with his wife.

Manny Quartucci strolls tables playing his accordion th nights per week. He showed his great style to our family when he played for my brother-in-law's birthday party! Mike Alongi, a relative of Bart Benninco, plays an Excelsior like Frank Marocco. Jerry Siegler plays a Giulietti with bassetti bass, similar to Leon Sash, with whom he studied for many years.

Lindy Kao plays a Bell, with a style similar to John Molinari. Describing this unforgettable evening is impossible, so I videotaped it for one of our BAAC meetings.

The Chicago and Milwaukee Accordion Clubs (90 miles close) meet on the 3rd and 4th Mondays of the month, and BAAC members are always invited.

In closing, I sincerely thank Lee Sash and the many fine accordionists who spent their Sunday evening hosting this San Francisco accordionist!

Don Nurisso

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Cotati....from p. 3

nd!) Young people were there, of course, but they certainly seemed in the minority. And it's not just a matter of "pulling in" a few more young people next year. What appeals to one age group, doesn't necessarily appeal to another. (Recall "our" tastes at a younger age, and our propensity to disagree with that which preceded us.) I personally like Zydeco music, but I know that it doesn't appeal to some people in my age group. However, it does appeal to the younger crowd, and at least a small part of the accordion's recent resurgence is tied to the increase in Zydeco music's popularity. It's always popular at Cotati, but has been placed in the last "slot" for the past two years. Probably because everyone wants to dance, and that "bothers" some folks. Maybe there's another reason, it's not important, but it would be nice to have a few more groups throughout the day who can pick up the crowd like TDA or Motordude Zydeco.

There are certainly other examples than just Zydeco music, but the point is that if we want to help the accordion grow in the next generation, we need to accommodate and include some music forms which aren't necessarily the same ones we favor. I love Alpine music on the accordion, and I'm certain that it's so good that it will never die out no matter how much Zydeco (or other) music gets played. The same is true of Italian music — it's here to stay. But occasionally we need to appreciate where

the accordion fits into the musical lives of others. It's enriching for all of us, and good for the accordion.

The comment of the weekend, in my opinion, went to a young woman sitting behind me whom I heard make the following comment after TDA had played. "That does it. I'm going home and buying an accordion. This is just *too much fun*." Hopefully, more folks got the same message.

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Lew Guglielmina

We announce with sadness the passing of long time BAAC supporter, Lew Guglielmina, on August 22nd in Redwood City. Lew, a retired woodshop teacher, attended BAAC functions frequently with his good friend, Ernie Lantz. We will miss Lew and his friendly presence at our meetings.

If you would like to join the San Francisco Bay Area Accordion Club, please send a check for \$20 payable to BAAC to our Financial Secretary, Frank Montoro, 1448 Tarrytown, San Mateo, CA. 94402. You will receive a newsletter monthly from July '95 through June '96. We welcome all interested persons!



Polka Tent at Cotati

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October 2, 1995
7:00 PM

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