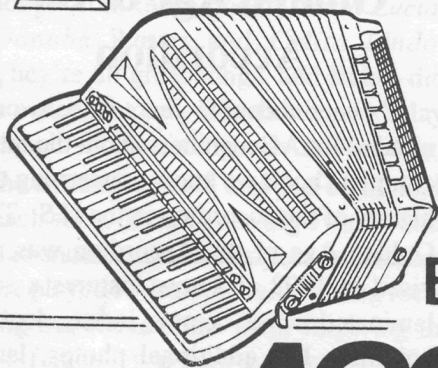


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

SEPTEMBER, 1996



September General Meeting

by Denny Huff

If you were going to miss a meeting this year, September wasn't the one. **Stas Venglevski** got up on the stage and took accordion playing to a level we seldom see. I would guess that most people do not often get to see/hear any instrument played as well as **Stas** performs on the bayan.

Because **Stas** was playing, the remainder of the program was purposely brief, but not insignificant. **Reno Pucci** had a lot of fun with his version of "Name That Tune!" The audience couldn't come up with the names, and, as best I could tell, **Reno** didn't know the names of some of the tunes either, but we all enjoyed it. We did all recognize *Lady of Spain* — move over Dick C.!

Bob Berta demonstrated that you can play while sitting on one of Gordon's accordion cases — but I don't advise it for some of our more "substantial" members. **Dominic Saso** poked fun at **Bob's** MIDI equipment, but **Bob** was undaunted



Stas Venglevski

and smoked through *Sabre Dance* and two other numbers.

Herb Meier, who's been a great addition to the Club since he became more visible, did a number of international songs which are his specialty. *Las Clases de Cha-Cha-Cha* (sung in Spanish) was obviously Latin. *Finjan Waltz*, sung in Hebrew, an old Armenian folk song, is an Israeli favorite. He followed with *Sisu et Yerushalaim* (Rejoice in Jerusalem), an Israeli hora. All played in **Herb's** typically fine fashion.

The old axioms are usually on the mark, and tonight we relearned that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. If you made it to the picnic, you got to see **Brian Campanella** play a few numbers on stage. And he usually sits in the park at Cotati and plays. But tonight was his debut on stage for the Club, and everyone loved it. He was great! **Brian**, who's working his own way through Palmer-Hughes, played three

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sept. 29th., Sunday. Accordion Club of the Redwoods Picnic, starting at 10AM. At Danish Picnic Grounds in Petaluma. Take 101, exit Petaluma Blvd. So. Left under 101 overpass to 101 So. entrance, 1.0 mile So., exit Kastania Ave. Ten dollars includes barb. chicken, salad, pasta, beer while it lasts. Call (707)838-2859.

Oct. 2nd, Wed. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests welcome. Call Ed at (415)589-8409 for directions.

October 7th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting. featuring Renate Bixby and her Button Boxers, Sharon Walters and her Klezmer group, and Mary-Alice with BAAC's "Mini-Ensemble". Donworth Hall, 22nd & Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Center. 7 P.

October 14th, Monday. BAAC Accordion Band (Fun Band) practice. House of Parties.

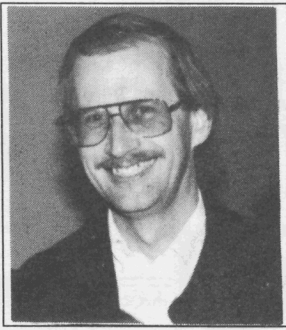
October 9th & 23rd, Wednesdays 7:00 PM. BAAC Ensemble Practice, House of Parties. Call Joe, 510-832-6938..

November 4th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting with very special guest artist, world-known accordionist Frederich Lips. Do plan to attend this once-in-a-lifetime event!

cont. on p 3.

President's Message

by Bob Berta



Looking back....and ahead. Since it is getting near the end of the year I have been thinking about all that has happened in the club. BAAC has had a great year! Some incredible performers from inside and outside the club has kept us constantly in awe of all that musical talent out there. We tried a few new ideas during the year....a workshop....a social dinner. Now it is time for another new idea.

The board is considering renting the hall for an hour BEFORE the normal meeting. Those who wish to participate in a workshop would arrive earlier. Vince Cirelli, our own repairman extraordinaire, has volunteered to do a program on accordion repairs and preservation answering the following questions:

- How does the accordion work?
- How is it made?
- How do you keep it working?
- How can you fix minor problems?
- How can you tell if a used accordion is in good shape?

Other potential workshops might include overcoming stage fright by Sev Garcia, tips and tricks for improving your technique by some of our teachers, etc. Before we proceed, though, we need some feedback as to your interest in these workshops and other possible subjects. There probably would not be any cost to attend the workshops other than reproduction costs for printed handouts which would be nominal. If you have some ideas or strong opinions on this idea please contact any board member and present your ideas and wishes. This is YOUR Club and the board wants to provide resources that the members can find value in.

Golden Age of the Accordion

It's been a couple years since we reminded BAAC members about the most complete book we know concerning the history of the accordion in the U.S. The Golden Age of the Accordion was revised in 1992 and now features a soft laminated cover, a new index, double columns, 150 additional photos, laser printing, life stories and articles about accordion greats, and info about many accordion manufacturers and major service centers.

Cost of the book is \$31.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling to US addresses. Make check payable to FLYNN ASSOCIATES and mail to:

Flynn Associates Pub. Co.
P O Box 917
Schertz, TX 78154-0917,

If you haven't been aware of this book previously, several BAAC members own it and speak of it with great approval. It's a highly satisfying investment for any accordion lover!

Let's Go!! Italy in 1997

Joe Petosa sends information about a tour of Italy to visit "The Accordion Capital of the World" and "The Treasures of Sunny Italy". Sound interesting? Here's all the information taken from the flyer which Joe included.

Starting May 27, 1997, this second annual accordion tour will travel by motorcoach to the Lakes Regions (within view of the Italian Alps), to Rome, Pompeii, Florence, Castelfidardo, Perugia/Assisi, and Venice. Sights visited include the Vatican, Coliseum/Forum, Trevi Fountain, Spanish Steps, Terme di Caracalla, Accordion Museum, Accordion and Reed Factories.

Count on impromptu concerts, family atmosphere, picnics, and plenty of free time for shopping and/or sightseeing.

"We will be exploring out of the way sights with our Italian-speaking American tour director. We will reluctantly leave Italy after 12 days," the flyer states.

Total Price \$2695.00

Based on double occupancy. Lodging in better hotels. Price includes air and ground transportation, transfers, museum and exhibit admissions, continental breakfasts. Maximum of 44 participants.

A refundable deposit of \$800 is required not later than October 15, 1996.

Those wishing to participate are urged to make reservations now. Upon cancellation, refundable deposit will be returned in full up to 60 days prior to May 27, 1997. Subject to standard tour procedure.

Send reservations (name, address, approximate ages, along with check for \$800 per person to:

Texas Specialty Productions
%Nick Ballarini
3964 Calculus Rd.
Dallas, TX 75244.

Or phone Nick at (214) 247-5000 with questions.

September General Meeting, cont.

songs from those books, *Santa Lucia*, *Danube Waves* and *Celito Lindo*. They're all great songs, and **Brian** did an excellent job. He didn't just "play them" — his timing was outstanding, the dynamics good, and you could feel each song. **Brian** got a big ovation and had another song in his pocket. *Minka*. He played with all the same strong feeling but added some great fingering in his finale. It was hard to tell who had the



Reno Pucci

bigger smile after the performance, **Brian** or his Dad, **Rob**, who also plays a chromatic accordion.

After intermission one important element of business was brought up by **Peter DiBono**. In recognition of nu-



Herb Meier

merous long hours supporting the Club in many ways, **Marian Kelly** was presented a gift certificate for dinner and a show in San Francisco. I can't imagine that **Marian** hasn't seen the Phantom yet, but apparently she hasn't, so we'll be giving her the opportunity. **Marian** almost single handedly (per **Peter**) prepared for and staged the BAAC booth at Cotati, and every month she makes a major commitment in producing our newsletter, which stacks up very well compared to other clubs. I'd say it was the best, but I'm prejudiced.

I can remember back in the 50's when there was a continuous banter between the USA and the Soviet Union. Each country claimed to be the first, biggest or best at anything we could imagine from medicine to heavy industry. If I had heard then that the Soviets were producing superior accordionists, I would have dismissed it as just more talk. Guess what? I think I would have been wrong. Not that the US doesn't have some superior players, but the Soviets clearly placed a different emphasis on player development. Based on the several accordionists we've seen, it certainly appears that the Russians have set a high priority for accordionists, given them a respected status, and trained them in great depth as musicians. And when **Stas Venglevski** sits down to play it becomes very obvious. (Note that **Stas** doesn't actually come from Russia; he's from Moldova, a southern republic in the old Soviet Union. He did study in Moscow and is obviously greatly influenced by Russian music.)

Saying that **Stas** is a great accordionist is an embarrassing understatement. It's like saying that Greg Norman is a good golfer or that Michael Jordan is a good basketball player. Maybe the best way to describe **Stas'** playing is to note that he is one of the very few players who have ever gotten total silence from a BAAC audience while performing!

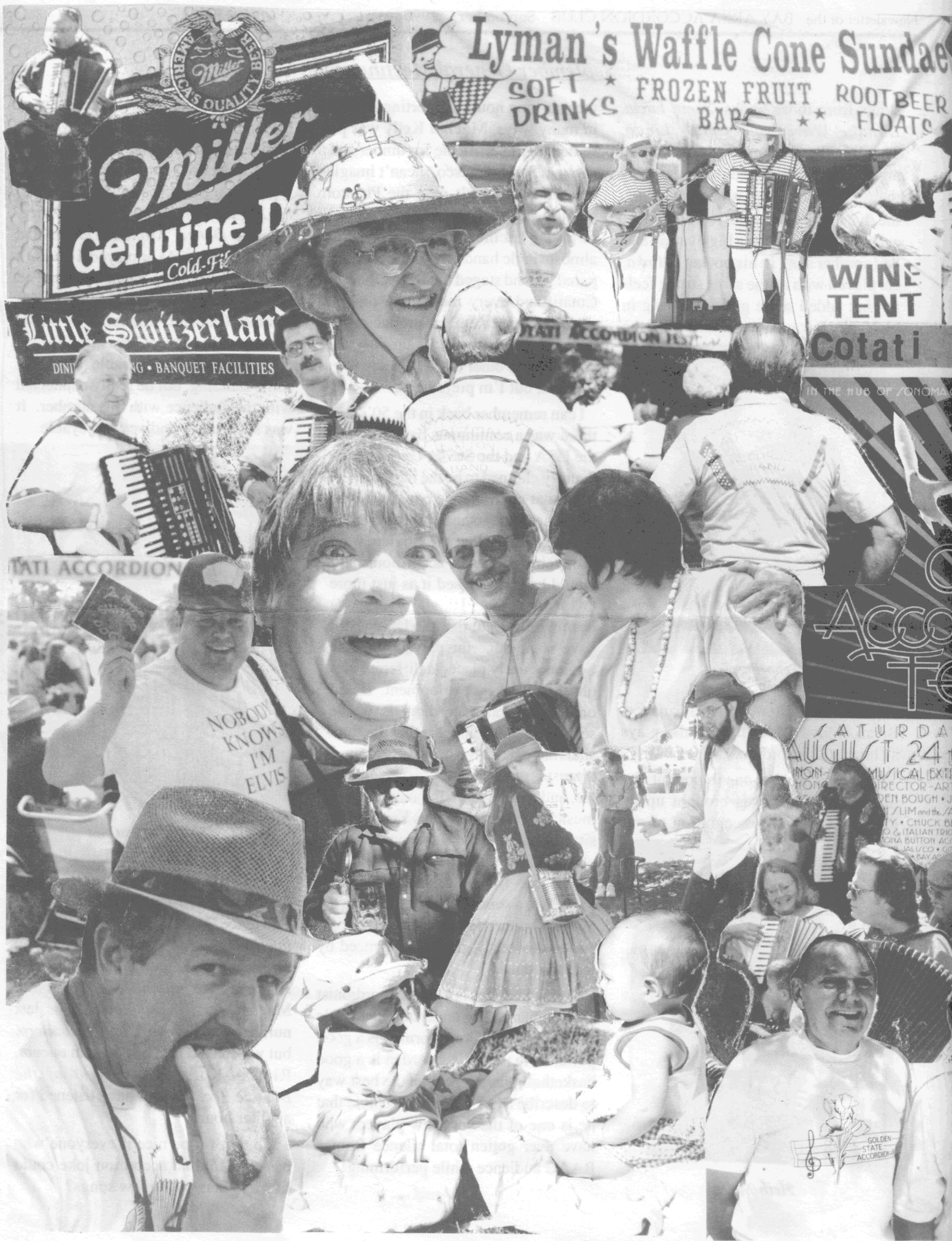
Stas began with a number from one of his tapes, Solotarjow's *Sonata Number 2*, in three movements. He then played many selections from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, the *March, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Spanish Dance, Chinese Dance, Arabian Dance, and Russian Dance*. As he played, I couldn't help thinking how much he sounded like an orchestra — or at least an Ensemble. Clementi's *Sonatina in G Major* warmed us up for *Carnival of Venice*. **Stas** received considerable applause, some standing, but he really connected with the audience with this number. It was superlative and very enjoyable.



Brian Campanella

Next we got a different look at a range of polkas, and I never once thought of Lawrence Welk! Rachmaninoff's *Italian Polka*, Lips' arrangement of the *Finnish Polka*, Quartucci's *Top Hat Polka* and *Vivianna Mazurka*, and Magnante's *Tic Toc Polka*. His last number was Frosini's *Jolly Caballero*, but we coaxed him back for an encore, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumble Bee*. I could have listened for another hour.

Wouldn't it be nice if everyone who has ever told an accordion joke could listen to **Stas** play a few songs?



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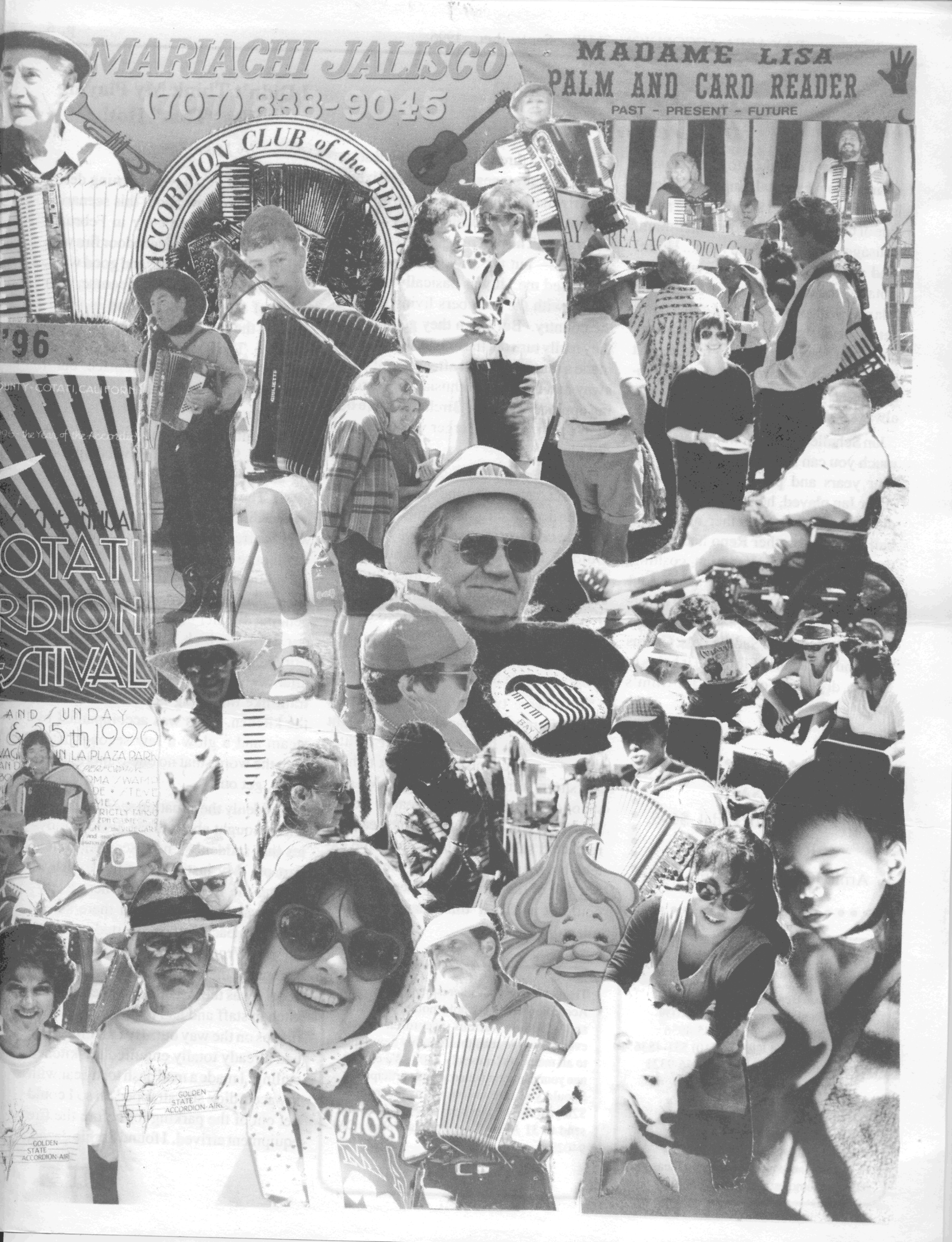
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Cotati

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COTATI NOTES

by Denny Huff

I think that I could go to Cotati just to sit and enjoy the tantalizing smells floating in from the food stands on the south side of the park. Waffle cones....Hmmm, Sausages...Hmmm, Thai food... Hmm! And another thing I look forward to at Cotati is the chance to spend some time relaxing with people whom I either don't get to see during the year or whom I see but never have the time to talk to. But there's plenty of time to relax and socialize at Cotati. Best of all, there's always some good music to enjoy.

Jan Schallenberger demonstrated how much you can learn on the accordion in four years and put on a great show! After Jan played, he and Peter Di Bono did two numbers together and had a ball. Peter's brother Reno had his trio there in authentic Venician costume (loved those straw hats!) cranking out good music. One of our personal favorites, Sourdough Slim, played both days — Sunday with the Saddle Pals, Cactus Bob and the Prairie Flower. (It helps to have a dry sense of humor for Slim's act.)

There were three groups playing Button Boxes, the Eurotones (with Renate Bixby), the Arizona Button Box Band (who were hot but found California chilly) and the Vidergars. They were all good — no big surprise — but the Vidergars especially impressed me. It was basically a family group, with the members living all over the country. But when they get together they really turn out the music. Jim Boggio made a return to Cotati after several years away and received enthusiastic welcoming applause. Bonnie Birch was there but didn't play; Chuck Berger was there and did play.

Golden Bough did a class job as featured act. Normally they don't emphasize the accordion quite so much, but they put it at center stage for both days. Catch Golden Bough (and Sourdough!) in Sonora at Thanksgiving. Other superior acts were literally too numerous to mention. There were several Zydeco bands, who always pick up the Cotati pace. Two Mexican bands, one of whom was new to Cotati...and on and on.

There were two things which were a little different this year and which caught my attention. One, it was just a little cooler — not uncomfortable, but t-shirts and shorts were a bit chilly at 10AM. And second, there were noticeably fewer BAAC'ers in attendance this year. It impacted sales at the booth to some extent, but more importantly, it seemed like not "all of the family was there." If you couldn't make it this year, you were missed.

I Didn't Think My Playing Was "That" Hot!

by Mike Zampiceni

So you say you have a burning desire to play? Then how about this scenario? What could be more cozy in February than to warm up by a nice indoor fire with genial people, tasty food, and good wine. Sounds ideal, doesn't it? Of course, your vision of this inviting setting is predicated on the fire being under control in a fireplace. The Pedrizetti Winery in Morgan Hill doesn't *have* a fireplace, but it *was* a fire place one Saturday evening in February.

The guitar player and singer I work with a lot, Sergio, and I showed up for a gig at the winery a few minutes before 6PM. The event was a wine tasting and Italian dinner, with catered food. The winery arranged to hold the event in their warehouse by using propane heaters in the dining room and propane burners in the kitchen. Hmmm, do you sense impending disaster here? We started doing our thing, which consists mostly of Euroethnic music, and about ten minutes after we started, we all heard a funny train-like thumping noise coming from the kitchen. This was accompanied by steam and a glow a few seconds later, then the words that no one wants to hear: "Fire, get out!"

Suddenly the situation seemed unreal, and I thought about those disaster movies that suddenly I now seemed to be a part of. My instinct was not to crowd around the front entrance where everybody was heading. I said there surely must be a back exit and started to search for it. Wrong! No other exit existed except the thankfully large, sliding front door. I was the last one out other than the kitchen staff and had to pass close to the flames on the way out. By that time, they had already totally engulfed the kitchen ceiling. I made a mad dash to my car with my accordion still strapped on so I could get out of the parking lot before the fire equipment arrived. I found Sergio dazed,

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Please use these numbers to give ideas, reactions, suggestions to our Board.

Thank you for your interest in the Bay Area Accordion Club. We hold monthly meetings and schedule various accordion-related events, and we send this monthly newsletter to all members (currently 340). We encourage your continued interest and participation. Should you care to join us, membership is \$20/year. Make check payable to BAAC and send to 31 Aliso Way, Portola Valley, CA 94028



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walking on the street with his guitar strapped on and carrying his other guitar. we both watched the conflagration from a safe distance and listened to the propane tanks explode sequentially, and were thankful that we had escaped with our lives from an untimely and certain death had we remained in the building only five minutes more.

I drove over the following day to inspect the damage. Remarkably, the dining room was intact, but was heavily smoke damaged. The owner said my accordion case and jacket were still inside, but they reeked like charcoal briquettes and were no longer usable. The upside of this story is that the owner/chef of the restaurant that catered the dinner heard me play and asked me to play at his restaurant on Saturday nights. I started in March, and I'm still there.

Friedrich Lips, *Bayan*

A Review of his CD, ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA

by Henry Doktorski

This album is not for the faint-of-heart; it is serious concert music of the highest caliber. It is not background music or music to relax to; it demands full concentration and attention from the listener. But those who allow themselves to become absorbed in these works may experience a mystical transformation, an awakening, for this music may not be "pretty," but it is always dramatic and profound.

Friedrich Lips, in my opinion, is one of the few concert accordionists on the earth today, who has sufficient technique, maturity and scholarship to bring these difficult works alive. The "Sonata #3" by Solotarjow is lengthy (21:58) and full of pathos. The center of the sonata is the tragedy; the battle against evil powers, as well as the confirmation of pure beauty and light harmonies. At times it is dark and eerie, as in the second movement which begins with a pianissimo ostinato bellows shake which is punctuated by the medieval chant from the mass for the dead: "dies irae, dies illa solvet saeculum in favilla" - "the day of wrath, that day of grief shall change the world to glowing ash."

The three lighter pieces by Larin provide a welcome contrast to the weightier first sonata. The opening theme of the first movement, (the first five notes of the ascending minor scale: la, ti, do, re, mi), is note-for-note exactly the same as the opening theme of the "sostenuto tranquillo" from the first movement of the popular "new-age" Symphony #3 (1976) by Henryk Gorecki. The sonata by Wolkow is another highly dramatic work and Lips' performance is powerful and full of virtuosity. He has a command over his instrument which is remarkable.

The partita, "Also sprach Zarathustra" by Sergei Berinski is based on Friedrich Nietzsche's well-known quotation. Equally famous is the symphonic poem by Richard Strauss (quoted in the movie "2001: a Space Odyssey") that holds the

same title. The first movement exhibits enormous emotional power which transforms into a dance of aggressive and wild character. The third movement (choral) represents the departure to the transcendent world and the fourth movement (a lullaby) presents a meditation about life, human nature and death. Berinski, like Solotarjow and hundreds of other composers before him, quotes the "Dies irae" theme in this work.

Sometimes, during very quiet sections, the listener may be distracted by a noticeable tape hiss in the background, and occasionally at the beginnings of pieces one hears "print through," that annoying ghost-like echo which immediately precedes a fortissimo entrance. This occurs when analog recording tape sits on the shelf too long. I hope future Lips releases will take advantage of digital technology, thereby greatly reducing such drawbacks. I highly recommend this album for lovers of 20th century classical accordion music who are not afraid to surrender themselves to powerful and dramatic music. The CD booklet is printed in English, German and French.

Program:

- W. Solotarjow: Sonata #3
Allegro, Allegro moderato, Largo,
Allegro vivace con anima
 - A. Larin: Three Pieces
Reflection, Dialogue, Hunter's Tale
 - K. Wolkow: Sonata #1
 - E. Derbenko: Toccata
 - S. Berinski: Also sprach Zarathustra
a partita in four movements
Cadence, Dance, Choral, Lullaby
- The album can be ordered from Deffner Company, 230 Herricks Rd, Mineola NY 11501 or from other retailers catering to classical accordion lovers.
copyright 1996 by Henry Doktorski
- Ed. Note: Mr Lips will have CD's available during his November BAAC performance.

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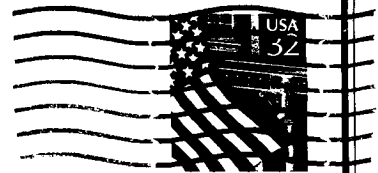
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