

JUL1, 1997

July General Tango Meeting

by Denny Huff

BAAC planners capitalized on a narrow window of opportunity and brought several years of planning and effort to fruition Monday night with the presentation of **New York Tango**, a celebrated Argentine Tango Trio. **Peter Adler**, who deftly served as M.C. for the evening, was the primary player in scheduling the group, and we all thank him for his tireless effort on our behalf. Additionally, **Peter** himself promoted this

event to those interested in tango all over the Bay Area, resulting in the largest crowd we have ever had! Attendance was more than 200, surprising and delighting all the BAAC'ers who had worried that the \$5 door fee might be a deterrent. Not hardly!

Prior to the performance, there was the usual smattering of business items. **Ed Suterko** of the Reno Accordion Club donated an accordion which will be of-

fered in a raffle sometime in the future. The Cotati booth, for which **Herb Meier** is looking for personpower, will primarily solicit new members and distribute information. **Peter Soave's** new CD was given rave reviews and is available for purchase (see p. 4). On to the show.

At the meeting and in the last newsletter, **Peter Adler** did a great job of giving us background information on the group, and there is no need to duplicate his cont. p. 6

Urgently Needed:

Newsletter helpers. Our trusty co-editor, Denny Huff, is leaving us! He and our photographer, Kathy Greenfield, will be moving to the Northwest shortly, so this is the last newsletter in which their photos and writeups can appear.

Obviously, we need to *try* to replace these two dependable people! Not an easy task.

If you could help with either writeups or photos, even just occasionally, your Editor needs to speak with you. Please call Marian, (415) 854-1896 to discuss possibilities. E-mail is mkelly@best.com. Thank you very much!

OFFICER AND BOARD

Nominations:

To All BAAC Members: At our August 4th meeting, the Nominating Committee will present its selections for candidates for open Officer and Board positions. At that time, nominations from the floor for additional candidates will be accepted. Positions open are: President, Vice-President, and two Board positions.

Should you desire to nominate someone, please be sure that individual is willing to accept the honor before you make the nomination.

Elections will be held at our September meeting.

BAAC Cotati Booth

Hear ye, hear ye! Ye olde BAAC booth at this year's Cotati Accordion Festival still needeth persons to helpeth. If you can spareth a couple hours during the afternoon on either day (8/23 or 8/24), do giveth a ring to Herb Meier at (415) 364-5398. Else you may signeth your name on the sheet at the August general meeting.

We're planning to maketh the booth mostly informational this year, so you won't have to worketh very hard, but we do want to sell some of those little Hero accordions which made such a hit last year.

Thanking ye members so very much! Herb Meier

President's Message

by Bob Berta

Early in July I spent a vacation week in Portland visiting relatives and checking out the Portland accordion community. I was delighted to hear a radio spot on my drive up announcing the meeting of the Portland Accordion Club on a station which featured a lot of ethnic music including accordions. The station also announced the concert next month of Jorgen Sundeqvist (who will be performing at our next club meeting).

The Porland meeting proved to be a delight with warm conversation and several fine accordionists. Before the start of the meeting I had a chance to play two brand new Bugari accordions that President Peter Kowsun is importing. Both the models were 120 bass, 41 key 4/5 dual tone chamber accordions in the Gold/Silver series. The sound was very nice and the workmanship wonderful. When he told me what he was selling them for, I was astounded. If a new accordion is in your future, you would be wise to contact Peter to get a quote.

At the meeting, I played a wide variety of music for about 45 minutes, and was well received. Hopefully, some of the Portland club's members will take me up on my invitation to reciprocate by visiting our Club and playing a few tunes for us.

My accordion had another good workout after I was asked to perform at my ex mother-in law's retirement community, That senior group listened for almost two hours while I played oldies, big band, folk music and a little classic.

I also had a chance to pay my respects to my late wife who is buried outside Portland in the small Dutch farming community of Verhboort.

A busy but successful vacation! I hope that you, too, are enjoying your summer!

Not Wanting to be Outdone...

Your Editor Also Mixed Vacation and Accordions

I've just returned from a delightful long vacation in France. While I was there, I managed to squeeze a bit of accordion into my itinerary.

The Ninth Annual French Accordion Meeting was held in Chartres, France, so I made certain to attend. A highlight was the accordion concert held in the fantastic Chartres Cathedral (12th century, Gothic) on the first evening of the meeting. Performers included Matti Rantanen of Finland, Frederic Deschamps of France, Youri and Ludmila Fedorov and Alexander Korbakov of Russia, and a fantastic young bayanist from Detroit, Peter Soave. I felt transfixed by the combination of the magnificent setting with the beautiful sounds, all the while knowing that this heavenly combination would soon be over.

Later, in Castelfidardo, Italy, I was privileged to hear Peter play an entire concert, this one organized by Massimo Pigini, and again in a church setting. The attendees were local men and women who had spent their lives with accordions, and I looked carefully around trying to guess some of the names. That didn't work well, so I again just listened and watched with pride while an American accordionist showed them how it's done.

I was as busy watching and listening as in Chartres, because I was close enough to really see what Peter was doing (and not to believe it!), and because I enjoyed so much watching the body language and expressions of the audience. It was clear after the first piece that they were "with him"; the vibes were terrific. Peter knew it, too, so I was able to observe and be fascinated by how he and the audience were feeding one another. The man beside me began to speak excitedly to me in Italian between numbers, so I tried to pretend kinship without saying a thing.

The pieces with which Peter so impressed my Italian friend and everyone else in the church that evening can be found on his new CD (and tape), which is described on pg. 4 and which is available for purchase.

Marian Kelly

The 7th Annual

Cotati Accordion Festival

Ready or not....it's coming up fast. This year's Cotati Accordion Festival, always held the fourth weekend in August, this year's dates being Saturday the 23rd and Sunday the 24th, is not to be missed!!

The Festival is dedicated this year to the memory of Jim Boggio, and the promotional poster/t-shirts feature Jim in the clouds with his trusty accordion, wearing a crown and a kingly robe. Angels hover above and around, and chickens are pecking near his feet. Quite a good resemblance.........

Here's the tentative schedule:

Saturday

- 10:00 Young Accordion Players
- 10:30 Main Squeeze
- 11:00 Sev and Bart
- 11:35 Babe Pollata
- 12:05 Strictly Tango
- 12:45 Kerry Christiansen
- 1:30 Los Compas
- 2:15 Sourdough Slim
- 3:00 The Lady of Spain-a-Ring
- 3:15 Those Darn Accordions!
- 4:05 Kenny Kotwitz
- 5:00 Dick Contino
- 5:45 Lyuba
- 6:15 The Gumbo Band

Sunday

- 10:00 Lone Prairie
- 10:30 Joe Umeck, Jr.
- 11:00 Joe Smiell
- 11:30 Mike Zampiceni
- 12:00 Kevin Roche
- 12:40 Ramon Trujillo & His Mariachi Jalisco
- 1:20 Los Compas
- 2:00 Polkacide
- 3:00 The Lady of Spain-a-Ring
- 3:15 Those Darn Accordions!
- 4:05 Sourdough Slim & His Saddle Pals
- 5:00 Dick Contino
- 5:45 Richard Yaus
- 6:15 Gator Beat

Bellows Shake for Mayors' Convention

by Ann Kona, BAAC Italian Correspondent

A few weeks ago, San Francisco hosted the Conference of Mayors, a six-day soiree that included sight-seeing, shopping, conferences and special events that included speeches by Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

Although I, of course, am not a Mayor of a United States city, I was invited to all the events. It's a consulate thing. One of my many duties during the Conference was to attend the gala reception and dinner at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium on Saturday, June 21st.

Upon entering the cavernous hall, my ears perked up and a smile adorned my face. Coming from one side of the long lobby was the beautiful sound of accordions wafting through the air. I told my companion, Gianfreddo, to get me a Campari subito and that I would be right back.

I made a — how do you say — bee line (whatever that means) toward the music and, much to my delight, saw 10 accordionists, in perfect unison, squeezing

Cotati Festival, cont.

If you're a dancer, there will be a polka tent with a hardwood floor across the road from the main action. The term "polka tent" is a loose one — you'll enjoy a wide variety of dances there.

And, as before, the Jam Tent will be available for those who want to make their own music.

Admission is \$7/day or \$12 for both days. Coolers are not allowed inside the gate.

Cotati is about 40 miles north of San Francisco, right off 101. The Festival is held on two side-by-side stages in the Plaza Park in the center of town. All roads lead to Plaza Park on that weekend! You'll want to come early for best parking.

Call the Festival number, (707) 664-0444 with questions.

out songs that I have never heard before.

The accordionists, looking very handsome in black pants, white shirts and red bow ties, included Bart Beninco, Lou Casalnuovo, Bob Delgado, Jim Firpo, Joe Simoni, Bob Smith, Lou Soper, Gary Drexler, Dennis Stoscher, and that dreamy Tom Torriglia.

Tom, who was acting as Conductor and Musical Director, told me that the evening's repertoire contained, appropriately enough, songs about cities or states including Georgia, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Seattle, Galveston, and so forth. Although I could not understand what the phrase "toddling town" meant, I did not for to care, because the music was bellisima!

Very few of the Mayors actually came down to see the ensemble, but those who did were thoroughly delighted. At one point, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown and Chief of Protocol, Charlotte Maillard stopped by to say thank you to the BAAC boys and to let them know that they appreciated their being part of the celebration. Tears almost came to my eyes.

Toward the end of the one hour program, the event coordinator came over to say how much everyone emjoyed hearing the music and that the ensemble was a big hit. When would ten accordionists not be a big hit?

Then I could see Gianfreddo motioning to me that it was time to go inside for dinner. As I started to walk away, I requested *Torna a Sorrento* (it's a city, no?), but, alas, the ensemble launched into something called *Do You Know the Way to San Jose?*

Gianfreddo told me that inside I would hear the famous American singer, Bonnie Riot. I thought that with a name like that, she was an odd choice for a convention that touched on urban problems. But I did not care! For my heart only sang to the sounds from the accordions. Congratulations to all the BAACalaureates for a job well done!

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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 \$25/year. Make check payable to BAAC and send to 31 Aliso Way, Portola Valley, CA 94028

PETER SOAVE'S New CD, PRIDE and PASSION

Peter Antonio Soave is a gifted artist. His performances on this recording will convince you beyond anything I can say. What Peter delivers is honest, direct and wholehearted — fullsome outpourings from a sincere and dedicated man — a young man — a person who **prides** himself on the integrity of his art. A person who has pursued his singular vision alone and with little support.

Soave is first generation. His parents came to America with the same hopes and dreams for a better life that have brought all of us here. Though Peter grew up in Detroit and was bathed in the American experience, he retained resonances of Italy. Thus, it was only natural that he discovered an early love for the accordion. It seemed to him that the instrument was waiting for him and was a familiar part of his soul — as were Verdi and the Neapolitan melodies that surrounded him at home. Any Italian-American will recognize the whispers and echoes of all this — it's as natural as breathing—but few of us possess Peter's genius.

Soave quickly discovered jazz and great musicians like Bird, Diz and Miles. On the accordion he heard greats like Art Van Damme and Leon Sash. He expanded his repertoire to include arrangements by great showmen like Magnante and Frosini. Galla-Rini's classical genius wasn't lost on him, either. Through all this he found himself and deepened his artistic intentions.

By the age of sixteen he was a superb master of the piano accordion and was ready to address international competition. Though he played well and placed well his first time out, he faced a dilemma. The type of accordion he played had been superceded and reinvented into a complex and beautiful instrument called the bayan (perhaps the most difficult instrument in the world to play). The bayan possesses a facility and potential that far outstrips the piano accordion. Forgetting subtleties, it can sim-

by Paul Magistretti

ply be stated that the bayan has 64 treble notes compared to a piano accordion's 41; the left hand complements the treble with 58 notes, giving the instrument a range equal to a concert grand; finally, a single hand's span can reach two and a half octaves!

With uncommon courage Soave decided to switch instruments. He would become a bayanist—even though there was hardly anyone in America who played it. He would essentially have to embark on the task alone, except for Lana Gore, his instructor, who now directed her talent to the bayan. Imagine Gore's ability to teach a world champion on one instrument and then change to another. The Russian and European students have the benefit of government financial support with their music conservatories. Peter had a single teacher. Peter's mid-career switch was analagous to Glenn Gould taking up the harp after his first Goldberg recording. The experts were less than supportive. In fact, they told him to his face that he would fail; that what he was attempting was impossible at his level of musicianship. Behind his back they laughed.

But he made the change. In an astonishingly brief time Peter returned to Europe and swept all the major competitions. Eventually, he became the only player in history to win the gold medal in all four major world championships.

But all that is behind him. It's a good story and a true one we can tell over and over when we're old and opening the vaults of memory. What matters now is the artistry of the man — that is what you'll find beautifully expressed on this recording.

The program begins with "Bordel (Whorehouse) 1907" by Astor Piazzolla from the Histoire du Tango. The piece was originally composed for guitar and flute. Peter is playing the composition as written without transcription. His right hand assays the flute and his left hand

(utilizing all five fingers) attends to the guitar. Peter achieves the qualities of the bandoneon while bringing to the music the broader palate of sounds and voicings that the bayan allows.

"Tanti Anna Prima" was wrutten by Piazzolla many years ago. There is a considered opinion by many (and Peter shares this view) that this piece is perhaps the most beautiful composition that Piazzolla ever wrote. The music was eventually reworked by Piazzolla and retitled thus transfigured into "Ave Maria, An Instrumental for Oboe and Piano." Soave has made his own arrangement which, whenever he's played it, has received tremendous response among musicians there is instant demand for the music. Peter plays the oboe part with the right hand and the piano accompaniment with the left. It's a haunting piece, and the rich textures and plaintive melody intermingle to create a spiritual and pathetic aura that's both uplifting and humbling.

Soave next presents the *Haydn* Piano Sonata in D Major and affords us a superb insight into the range and expressivenes of his instrument compared to a piano. We immediately begin to find harmonic connections and relationships we never fully realized due to the natural sostenuto of the bayan (in contrast to a piano's percussive attack and swift decay of notes). It's a unique and joyful experience in its own right and his performance places him among the great keyboard artists of our time.

Leon Boellmann's "Suite Gothique" in four movements, (1. Introduction-chorale; 2. Minuet Gothique; 3. Prayer to Notre Dame; 4. Toccata) is a staple of bayanists. It's a work of the late 19th century Parisian organist/composer full of a kind of fin de siecle charm and bombast. The spooky quality of the Toccata makes perfect sense in terms of the zeitgeist — Peter has been known to call it "Halloween music." You'll find that compared to other bayanists, Peter's

Soave CD, cont.

playing is beautifully balanced between the right and left manuals; thus we always experience a full and complete instrumental rendering of the music.

The late Stanley Myer's "Cavatina" from "The Deer Hunter" was scored for solo guitar played by John Williams in the film of the same name. Here, Soave has made his own arrangement and developed a rich, almost orchestral harmonic accompaniment — at times surging forward with a melodic line that nearly replicates the poignant sense of Williams' delicate guitar. This piece effectively evokes the pathos and tragedy of Michael Cimino's excellent film of the 70's, and Peter stirs many complex and profound feelings with his beautiful rendition.

Claude Bolling, the celebrated French jazz pianist-composer, was greatly influenced by American music (Ellington, Basie, Waller etc., et al). Soave has extracted three movements from his suite "Jazz a la Française: "Bach to Swing"; "Garnerama" (an homage to the great, late elfin pianist Erroll Garner); finally, "A la Française." For these selections Peter is accompanied by Billy Cairo on drums (a legendary performer who has played with everyone from Sinatra to Diz) and Ralph Armstrong on bass (who has similarly worked with legends like Miles). On these selections you'll hear the powerful swinging quality that pervades Peter's music whether he's playing Bach or Piazzolla. All music swings and Bach more than anyone. But too few classical artists achieve the lively and fluid phrasing that breathes life into the notes. Bach wrote great riffs. Conversely, many jazz musicians when playing "from the charts" sound flat and lifeless. Here, Soave further reveals his genius by playing a score without a hint of doing so. His talent cruises and soars as if he were improvising.

The final selection needs no introduction. Brahms' Hungarian Dance #5 is overly familiar. But I doubt that you've ever heard it played with such blazing heat and pulsating power. Here, Peter sets the Magyars on fire, sending them racing across the Hungarian puszta astride demi-mongolian mounts. It's a fitting and breathtaking finale!

Peter Soave has used the words of BAAC member Paul Magistretti's, who paints beautiful pictures with language, on the jacket of his new CD. (Those words have been somewhat abbreviated here for reasons of space.) If Paul's descriptions have convinced you that this is a truly wonderful recording (as it is), you may purchase either a tape or CD from Marian Kelly.

Tapes are \$10 and CDs are \$15. If she needs to mail your item, you will be charged for shipping. To order, call her at (415) 854-1896.

WANTED:

Original Accordion Music!

Have you written any unpublished accordion music? Do you have some ideas for a composition for accordion which you've somehow never put on paper? Well, here's your chance to see your music in print.

Norman Seaton, who is President of the Texas Accordion Association, is compiling original accordion compositions for a book which he will publish next year. He says he already has one hundred pieces of new accordion music, but he is looking for more!

He will include your piece(s) in the book if you will send it to him. His address is: 11240 Drummond Drive, Dallas, TX 75228.

If your piece is hardwritten and must be put into publishable form, he may charge you up to ten dollars to do that for you. He would prefer, then, to receive material on a computer disk, but will accept it in any form.

NOTICE: **BAAC Ensemble Rehearsals,** being held at Moose Lodge in Daly City, are on vacation, with plans to resume in September.

We report with regret the passing of BAAC member Val Ballerini.

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Accordions

July General Meeting, cont.

efforts. However, a few comments are in order. The trio consisted of Raul Jaurenaof, of Uruguay, North America's foremost bandoneonist; pianist Ethan Iverson, a noted jazz musician; and Pablo Aslan on bass. Pablo has played with Raul at many venues and the trio has performed together for a number of years. Pablo, in addition to an excellent performance on electric bass (I don't believe I've ever seen one quite like it before) also functioned as group spokesman and gave us interesting history and background on the tango and the bandoneon. For example, the "typical" tango group is composed of two bandoneons, two violins, a piano and a bass. No drums! For some reason, known only to experts, the drummers haven't broken the glass ceiling of the tango world. And, as popular as the tango has become, some of its musical evolution at the hands of, for example, Astor Piazzolla have not always been met with glee by more traditional musicians.

The music was superb and highly applauded throughout the evening. Even my untrained ear immediately recognized the "jazzy" interpretation which **New York Tango** infused into its performance. The first half included the following pieces; Cuando Llora la Milonga; 9 de Julio, with a great bass solo and heightened applause; Desde el Alma, a waltz; Verano Poreño, which sounded especially jazz oriented; El Choclo; and Milonga Sentimental, which was particularly catchy and fun to listen to. A milonga, **Pablo** explained, was an ancestral predecessor of the tango.

Pablo also showed us how Raul included the obvious pulse or accents into each number. He plays standing (as did Piazzolla), with his foot on a chair, balancing the bandoneon on his knee. Quick movements of his leg at the appropriate moments result, then, in the typical and compelling accents characteristic of the music.

We could have listened to more, but Frank Schlotter had



NEW YORK TANGO Ethan Iverson, Raul Jaurenaof, Pablo Aslan

generated exceptional interest in the raffle, and it was time for the drawing. The holder of the first ticket got to choose between

a stuffed musical bear who played six songs on his accordion (donated by **Kimric Smythe**) and \$60. It was a slam dunk for **Sylvia Rasmussen** who grabbed the cash, opening the way for **Barit Tisel**, the other drawing winner, to walk off with the coveted, accordion-playing bear. And thanks, **Frank**, for holding the drawing every meeting. As you know, half of all funds raised go



Raul Jaurenaof

into the BAAC scholarship fund!

After a pleasant visit with friends, we all reassembled for a second half filled with more spectacular music. Even though the group played primarily tango music, it was obvious that each of their individual talents and musicianship was quite fundamental and deeply rooted. Selections included *Malena*, a '40s song; *Sentimiento Gaucho; Palomita Blanca*, another waltz; *Felicia*, a more classical dance number; *Silveta Porteña*, another milonga, and *La Cumparsita*. *Silveta Porteña* featured a section of rhythmic hand tapping by all three players which suddenly burst back into the spirited instrumental melody to the great enjoyment and applause of the audience.

We/I have often said that it would be good to include more variety in our guest selections. As much as I like the "traditional" music we often hear, we all broaden our horizons by sampling something different. And this meeting was a great "horizon broadener." It was a combination of outstanding musicianship, strong individualistic interpretation, and a classic (if not often heard) style of music. Great job, Peter Adler!



Pablo Aslan

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

August 1, 2, 3, Fri, Sat, Sun. Rocky Mountain Accordion Celebration. The First Annual Accordion celebration in Philipsburg, Montana, a quaint historic mining town. Featuring Bonnie Birch and Lindy Kao. Sponsored by Five Valley Accordion Association. Call (406) 859-3450 for info. Or Marian has list of hotels and events.

August 3rd, Sunday. Accordion Club of the Redwoods PICNIC. Danish Club Picnic Grounds, near Kastania Ave and Hwy 101 in So. Petaluma. Ten dollars (under 12 yrs \$4) includes bbqchicken, salad, pasta, bread, some beer. Other beverages on sale, as bringing your own is not allowed. For more info (707) 874-3494.

August 4th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting with Gwyn Lister & friends, Joe Simoni, Norma Parsons, Frank Schlotter, and featuring Jorgen Sundeqvist. Jorgen is also scheduled to play in San Diego on August 10th, Seattle on August 11th, and Chicago on August 18th. Donworth Hall, 22nd & Eucalyptus, S.F. just north of Stonestown Shopping Center. 7PM.

August 7-10th, Thurs-Sun. 4th Annual Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration, Leavenworth, WA. Competitions, parade, dancing, concerts, workshops. Call Anne Koenig at (509) 548-5807 or check the web at www.leavenworth.org.

August 13th, Wed. (note change to <u>second Wed.</u>) BAAC Board Meeting 7:30 PM at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. San Francisco. Guests welcome. Call Ed at (415) 589-8409 for directions.

August 20 - 24th, Accordion Federation of North America (AFNA) Annual Music Festival, Hyatt Regency, Long Beach. Workshops by Paul Pasquali, Gordon Kohl, Karl & Iona Pukara, Larry Pino, competitions, banquet, concerts. Call AFNA (213) 686-1769 or Larry Pino, (801) 277-9991.

August 23 & 24, Sat/Sun. Cotati Accordion Festival. This year's featured guest (both days) will be Dick Contino. Find article and complete schedule on p. 2.

Sept. 8th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting featuring Vyatcheslav Semyonov (bayan) and his wife Natasha (domra), with Robert Sattler (bayan).

September 14th, Sun. ALSI (San Diego Accordion Club sponsors Dick Contino athte El Cajon Performing Arts Center, 210 E. Main St., El Cajon, 2-4 PM. Call (619) 440-2277.

Sep 14 - 20: Joe Smiell's Button Box Camp at Norden. Call (510) 832-6938 for info.

December 15. Annual Accordion Club of the Redwoods dinner and December meeting. Volpi's Restaurant, Petaluma. *Please send Calendar Information to Your Editor, using the address on the last page. Thank you.*

Correction

Last month's newsletter contained an article called *Fifteen Tips for Accordion Health* by **Boaz Rubin.** It identified **Boaz** as being from the "greater Seattle area."

Boaz wants everybody to know that he's a local guy, lives in Oakland, and is is the Accordion Repair business. He's been running his business card in our newsletter for several months now and reports that business is picking up!

It was especially nice, don't you think, for a fellow who earns money repairing *unhealthy* accordions to be encouraging all of us to take good care of our instruments.



Now that we've had such a great bandoneon lesson from Raul Jaurenaof, here's one candidate for the position of BAAC Bandoneonist. It appears, though, as if Bob Smith needs a little coaching about how to play standing and using his leg to create a strong tango beat.

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