



San Francisco Accordion Club

OCTOBER 2012

NEWSLETTER

Playing October 21

Xavier De La Prade is a lifelong teacher who taught for many years at the College of Marin and Marin Country Day School in Marin County and at St. Elizabeth's High School in Oakland, using his accordion as a teaching instrument in his French classes. Born and raised in Barre, VT, Xavier studied accordion with Joseph Zampicini and served in the Peace Corps in Tunisia. He specializes in French music and plays for many functions in the French community. Being a teacher, Xavier encourages audience participation, and when he plays in retirement homes, he brings along lyrics of golden oldies, including some written by his father-in-law, Nacio Herb Brown.

Peter DiBono has had a long, outstanding career as a police inspector with the San Francisco Police Department – and another one as a premier accordionist who has played for presidents, royalty, Supreme Court Justices, Hollywood actors, and opera stars. Peter started playing at age 9 and never abandoned his passion for the accordion. In time, he left the SFPD to pursue his love of music full time. Peter performs, teaches, arranges accordion music, and squeezes in some gardening and tinkering with home projects.

Soprano **Linda Yoshida Wenstrand** grew up in Japan and recorded with Columbia Records at age 13. After attending what was then the National Music Camp at Interlochen, MI, at 15, she won a scholarship to the University of Michigan and completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Voice Performance. Linda has worked as an interpreter in the U.S., Japan and Mexico, and founded and ran the English Academy in Woodside for 10



Peter DiBono



Linda Yoshida Wenstrand

years. She has performed in many operatic and musical roles, produced musical and choral concerts for local schools, and performed benefit concerts since 1993. She is a school volunteer and an avid tennis player.

Lorenzo Lucchesi began his accordion journey at age 7 after watching Myron Floren perform on an old "Lawrence Welk Show." His first instructor, Skyler Fell, passed her passion and love of the instrument to Lorenzo, and his next instructor, Peter DiBono, contributed his unwavering discipline and sense of purpose. The young master loves cooking Asian and European food and hanging out in North Beach, getting to know restaurateurs, beatniks, poets, fellow musicians and locals. An "A" student at San Francisco's St. Finn Barr School, Lorenzo plans to play one day at

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the San Remo Music Festival in Italy, and become a great marketer to ensure the success of his music business. He also plans to write a cookbook and open a European fusion restaurant, perhaps making an occasional cameo appearance blasting music of every genre.

Isaac Teich, 13, has been studying accordion with Peter DiBono for six years, and has enjoyed playing a range of pieces from classical music and old standards to Italian favorites. Isaac is a seventh grader at Presidio Hill School in San Francisco, where his favorite subjects are history and science. He plays soccer, loves the outdoors, and writes short stories. He looks forward to continuing his work with the accordion and venturing into genres such as jazz and rock.



Lorenzo Lucchesi



Isaac Teich

Scholarship Program

Each month you may have noticed an announcement in the Newsletter regarding the San Francisco Accordion Club's Scholarship program. Each monthly meeting we have a 50/50 raffle to benefit the Scholarship program. But, how many of you know the details of the program?

The club's mission, in establishing a scholarship fund, is to provide financial support to students interested in studying the accordion or enhancing their knowledge of the accordion and accordion music, who for financial reasons, may not otherwise be able to do so. Scholarship funds can be used for taking lessons, renting an instrument, upgrading or purchasing an accordion to enable musical growth and proficiency, or to attend an accordion workshop, camp or convention. Scholarships are awarded in amounts of up to \$300 per recipient per year. The only requirement, besides financial need, is that the student must either be studying with, or be recommended for a scholarship by a teacher who is a member in good standing with the Club. There is no maximum age limit.

The Scholarship program is funded with the proceeds from the 50/50 raffle we have at each Musical Program the third Sunday of the month. The half of the ticket sales kept by the Club goes directly to the fund. We currently find ourselves in a predicament however. Scholarship Program

Guidelines stipulate that the Scholarship Fund cannot exceed \$1,500 at the end of the fiscal year and we have almost met the cap. Any excess funds are returned to the General Fund. We don't want to have to divert scholarship money back to the General Fund. We would rather award scholarships and bring this balance down, while supporting aspiring accordion enthusiasts, but in order to do so we need applicants. In spite of running a monthly reminder in the Newsletter, with special reminders the month before we would normally award the scholarships (April and October), we have not received any applications. Teachers, if you have students who might qualify, please don't hesitate to assist them in completing an application. Students, if you think you might qualify, don't forget that Scholarship assistance is not just for lessons – there are numerous Accordion camps and Conventions happening all over the country. If you are a student of a teacher who is not a member of the SFAC, you might want to encourage them to join so that you might be eligible to receive a Scholarship award. Please don't let us hit the fund cap! Scholarship Guidelines and Application Forms are available at the monthly meetings Ask at the ticket desk, or by emailing the Club Secretary, Mike Zampiceni at: eclecticguy@comcast.net

SEPTEMBER 2012

The Jam band played welcome music and then President Lynn Ewing started the meeting by giving thanks to the crew who make the meeting possible: especially Dominic Palmisano who runs the admissions desk, the raffles, and sales of calendars, and sound men Paul Cain and Vince Rinaldi without whom nothing would ever be set up in time or at all. Lynn introduced the new board member nominees: Vince Rinaldi and Jean Moshofsky Butler. The elections were unanimous, and the Club has a fully functioning Board for another year. Lynn also thanked Frank Montoro and his friend Jonelle. Every month they collect, stamp and mail the Newsletters.

Ellen Karel, whose specialty is French accordion music, played first. She started with two Bal Musettes, a style of French music and dance that first became popular in Paris in the 1880s. She explained her fascination with French accordion music and played several more pieces, including a potpourri of short tunes with accompanying stories. Her finale was *La Vie en Rose*, one of Edith Piaf's greatest songs.

Grigoriy Krumik began his set with a short description of the bayan which has a great advantage over a conventional piano accordion. The *Russian voice* was clearly evident in his performance. The first piece was a Russian tragedy, filled with the unmistakable Russian lamentation sound. His second piece was a Russian dance and he then ended his solos with Mozart's *Turkish March*.

Vladimir Zagadskiy, a tenor singer dressed in a



Mike Zampiceni



Ellen Karel

Russian peasant costume joined Grigoriy and his lyrical tenor voice filled the room, and brought several people in from the bar in to listen. He introduced each song with a short explanation of the title and theme, and pointed out special features to listen for. In the first song *Linden Tree*, Vladimir noted that the bayan would imitate a bird song from time to time, and indeed it did. He joked about *Katya's Song*, in which a traveling salesman invites Katya to see his goods after the fair has closed for the day. The final song was the famous *Kalinka*. Vladimir had the audience singing along on the chorus repetitions of "Kalinka, kalinka, kalinka moy!"

Mike Zampiceni played next beginning with some Cabaret Music and then a jazz version of *Tea for Two*. After the audience requested "something Italian" he played *Flight of the Angels*, and joked about his views versus Bill Topanga's of Silicon Valley Accordion Club, over the importance of speed in playing. Bill thinks that Mike needs a fire extinguisher! Mike continued with his arrangements of a surprise pair of tunes which everyone would recognize, but could they name and date them? The audience knew: *Start of Something Big*, and *Gravy Waltz*. He finished with a Henry Mancini piece: *Charade*. The audience loved it.

In addition to teaching, Mike plays professionally all over the Bay Area and beyond.



Vladimar and Grigoriy



Skyler and Lynn

The Aurora Mandolin Ensemble played the second half of the meeting. Led by **Josephine Pellegrini**, this group includes mandolins, mandolas, mandocello, guitar, string bass, flute, and accordion (played by Don Nurisso). They were amazing. First, as you see in the picture, they spare no pains to appear as a professional classical music group. It is no surprise that several members are indeed classical music professionals. Their first piece was *Marche Russe*. Among the next few pieces were *Besame Mucho*, *Blue Tango*, and Josephine's arrangement of a Neopolitan piece: *I te vurnia a vasa* (I wish you would kiss me). They played a singalong in German: *das Chianti Lied*. Josephine coached us in the chorus "Ja ja der chianti wein. There were many more beautiful pieces: *Begin the Beguine*, *Oblivion* (by Astor Piazzolla). In a rousing finale, they concluded with *Vecchia* and *Espana Cani*.



ACCORDION EVENTS

AccordionUSA.com is an information packed web site featuring articles about worldwide and local events music, theater and art. Check it out and read about . . .

Joe Soprani to Receive Prestigious Award

Cory Pesaturo In Concert

Mario Tacca and Mary Mancini in October Performances

Dr. William Schimmel's Performance Schedule

Paul Betken Pays Tribute to Leon Sash at Florida Smash

This year's Big Squeeze: aka O.C. Accordion Festival scheduled for Sunday, October 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Orange County Market Place in Costa Mesa will pair up its various accordion based bands with dance experts, teachers and champions.

The Main Stage will spotlight music from the Louisiana Bayou with Zydeco and Cajun dance style teacher A.J. Gibbs revving up the audience on the dance floor for three bands playing everything from Louisiana Swamp pop to sophisticated New Orleans tunes.

The World Trophy Accordion organization presents the 62nd Trophée Mondial at the Bing Crosby Theater, Oct. 23-27, 2012, Spokane, Washington. This prestigious competition will bring the best and the brightest of the accordion world to the United States for an exciting week of grueling mastery of technique and sound. \$20,000 in Prize Money will be awarded.

Similar to the Olympics, accordionists, from Asia, Europe, Australia, North America, South America, and Africa will showcase their considerable talent. The competition runs for five days, culminating in the crowning of the 2012 World Trophy Accordion Champions.

Spectators can attend daily competitions, nightly concerts and enjoy the art of the accordion in various locations downtown during the event. For more information about schedules, tickets and hotels, visit www.worldtrophyaccordion.org



Cory Pesaturo

PLAY FOR US!

We are always grateful and accepting of anyone who wishes to play for us as warm up before the meeting starts, during the break, or in the first part of the program.. Share your talent and hone your performance skills! Call Domenic Palmisano, 415-587-4423, or email him : accord47@gmail.com to sign up.

SFAC Newsletter Ad Policy

Members may place one small ad (business-card-size) for one month free of charge in a given year; after that the charge is \$10 per issue or \$100 per year.

Monthly ad prices for members: quarter-page ad \$25.00; half-page ad \$50, and a full-page ad \$100. Non-member rates are double the member rates. A flyer (no larger than 5" x 8") advertising an event may be included in one issue for \$50 for members, \$65 for non-members.



Front Row, Jean Butler, Scotty Williamson,
Mike Zampiceni Back Row: Maryanne Romanowski,
Dominic Palmisano Vince Rinaldi, Lynn Ewing,
Don Nurisso.

The San Francisco Accordion Club is happy to support Renee de la Prade's **2012 Accordion Babes Calendar** this year, as we have in the past. Calendars will be available at our club meetings while they last beginning this month. For the low price of \$15 you will receive the collectible Accordion Babes Pin-up Calendar for 2013 and accompanying CD, which combines folk music, pop tunes and dance tunes from 13 fine bands into one awesome indie compilation. Bring your calendar back for autographs when the Babes play for us in January of 2013!



President's Message

Welcome to the new Board of Directors for the SF Club, and THANK YOU! Our Current Board: Lynn Ewing, President, Dominic Palmisano, VP, Mike Zampiceni, Secretary, MaryAnne Romanowski, Treasurer, Directors at large, Don Nurisso, Scotty Williamson, and new Board members Jean Moshofsky Butler and Vinny Rinaldi.

Vinny is well known to club members as one of our "sound men" and he has worked for years with Kimric Smythe in Smythe's Accordion Center, teaching accordion lessons and doing repair and restoration of accordions. He looks forward to playing with the Jam Band at our meetings, and is an accomplished, though shy accordionist. He says, "Thanks to the SF club members for the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors." I think we should say thank YOU Vinny, for all you have contributed to this club. Vinny was born in New Jersey and has lived in San Francisco since 1967. In his free time, Vinny can be found at his "home away from home" in Mexico.

Jean Moshofsky Butler was playing piano for many years when an accordionist friend suggested one day that she try the accordion. She did, and her life became infinitely richer as a result. She is part of an accordion/violin/clarinet ensemble which entertains many neighbors from her back deck, obsessively pursues sheet music for the accordion from odd and sundry parts of the world and plays a very eclectic assortment of music as a result. When she is not annoying her family and friends with her accordion she teaches science-based gardening at Lakeshore Elementary School in San Francisco, works as a psychic, and continues to study horticulture and music at City College.

Two of our members, **Skyler Fell and Frank Petrilli** had an opportunity to attend the "*Festival Internazionale della Fisarmonica di Castelfidardo*." this year.

Skyler Fell was there as the proprietor of her shop **Accordion Apocalypse**, and had some great adventures—visiting the Accordion Museum and getting to witness an intonation demonstration (reed tuning before the reeds are mounted to the wooden block and before the reed leathers are in

place). She met other accordion repair people from Italy and was able to tour some of the factories. She also had an opportunity to play both the largest and smallest accordions in the entire world on the same day. Later, she reported . . .

“ Today we played on stage in the main piazza at The International Accordion Festival, and drew a great crowd. Everyone clapped along and loved to come and talk to us after the performance. The Italians loved the American girls!”

Frank Petrilli was involved in several events, including playing with his quartet at Caffe Accordeon, featuring songs from his new CD ***Totally Frank*** and a performance with **Antonino de Luca** a 21 year old accordionist from Sicily.

From the Italian press

“Among the many groups, the presence of a duo almost improvised consisted of accordionists Antonino De Luca (Italy) and Frank Petrilli (United States). Their performance perceived as very important in technical content, was a striking reminder of a great accordionist and World Jazz Legend: Frank Marocco. Both were students of the unforgettable and memorable accordionist. Antonino and Frank performed a series of jazz songs from the U.S. Master’s discography.”

Frank also participated in the “Music Reality Show” which was even more of a challenge for him, as he does not speak Italian! Visit his new website at www.frankpetrilli.com

Lynn Ewing



Skyler at a Museum



Frank Petrilli plays at Castelfidardo



Antonino DeLuca



Skyler Fell and Vince Cirelli see pg. 8-9

Vincent Joseph Cirelli

December 21, 1920 – September 29, 2012

In the first half of the 20th Century, you couldn't walk down the streets of the North Beach district of San Francisco without hearing the sometimes sweet and sometimes raucous sounds of the accordion wafting out of open windows. North Beach was considered the hub of accordion culture, host not only to the many Italian immigrants among whom the accordion was most popular, but also a flourishing accordion manufacturing industry.

This was the environment in which one of the true accordion heroes, Vince Cirelli, was born and raised. Vince was born in December of 1920 to Felice and Carmela Cirelli in the Telegraph Hill neighborhood of North Beach. Vince's father Felice had emigrated from the small town of Verbicaro in the Cosenza province of Calabria, Italy in 1905, arriving in San Francisco in 1906 at the age of 18, just two weeks after the Great San Francisco Earthquake. Besides doing manual labor and eventually starting a barber shop business, Felice performed at an old Chinese vaudeville theater on what was then the "Barbary Coast."

At the age of 9, Vince recalled hearing the sound of an accordion coming from an open window across the street while he was outside playing. He was transfixed. Shortly thereafter, his father rented an accordion for \$5 a month, and the now 10-year old Vince began accordion instruction with Emilio Civita, a graduate of the Conservatory of Music in Milan. By age 12, Vince was playing Italian-style standards at



parties and sing-alongs. It was also at the age of 12 that Vince's interest and dedication to the accordion was noticed by Faust Piatanese of Colombo and Sons Accordion Corporation. Piatanese offered Vince a part-time job after school as a shop helper at the Colombo and Sons accordion factory. It was this first job that introduced Vince to the world of accordion manufacture and sparked his dream of one day building his own accordions.

During his attendance at Galileo High School in San Francisco, Vince began to develop and refine skills that would transform him into the master craftsman he would later become.

Attending both day and night classes in woodworking and cabinet making, Vince utilized every resource for making accordion parts. It is no surprise that he began to design and build his first model while still in high school.

When Vince graduated, he returned to working at Colombo and Sons, no longer as a shop boy, but working right alongside the master craftsmen Mario Zanoni, Angelo Pietri and Chuck Zanoni and master tuner Eric Gylling.

The United States became actively involved in WWII and Vince answered the call of his country in 1941, serving in the US Coast Guard for 4 years. When he returned home, Vince was able to complete the first of seven Cirelli accordions, whose progress had been interrupted by the war. Deciding to put his first opus to the test (all 140 bass buttons, 43 treble keys and over 2,000 parts) he spent the next several years playing accordion across the country, entertaining onboard "train tours" sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

He finally returned home for good and in 1946, Vince established Cirelli Accordion

Service. Initially he began making accordion parts including bass and treble shells for the Pacific Accordion Company. Later in the year, Caesar Pezzolo, a well-known composer and teacher, engaged Cirelli to upgrade his line of imported accordions specifically for the American market. The design revisions incorporated by Vince greatly improved the instrument and were sent back to the factory in Italy. The accordion, La Melodiosa, was a success and considered by many artists to be one of the finest instruments produced at the time.

In 1949, Vince married Ann Victoria Pirolo and settled down, focusing his career primarily on repairing, tuning and teaching the accordion. Cirelli Accordion Service was contracted by West Coast Wholesale Music, H.C. Kessler and Pacific Music Supply Company to be their technician. Vince inspected and serviced virtually every new Frontalini, V. Soprani and Galanti accordion received by these companies. If you own one of these instruments today, it is quite likely that Vince gave it its first inspection this side of the Atlantic.

In 1963, through world-renowned recording artist Michael Corino, Vince was introduced to Lee Deiro, owner of Pietro Deiro Publications founded by Lee's father. Soon, Cirelli Accordion Service became the exclusive West Coast distributor for Pietro Deiro Publications – one of the world's largest publishing houses of accordion music. In the same year, Vince was approached by Mario and Edward Pancotti of the Excelsior Accordion Company, looking to establish a full-service Bay Area dealership through Cirelli Accordion Service. Vince sold and serviced the Excelsior line of accordions for more than 27 years.

While slowing down a bit with age and time, Vince has remained dedicated to his career with the accordion and is known and recognized as a master craftsman. Vince also has been generous with his time, and in passing on his many years of experience to future generations interested in accordion repair. Vince has mentored and tutored local repair people Kimric Smythe of the Smythe's Accordion Center in Oakland and most recently Skyler Fell of the Accordion Apocalypse Repair Shop in San Francisco. Vince characterizes his repair method as “hands on,” using all 5 senses.

So what became of those seven custom-built Cirelli accordions? There are only two known to remain. One was given back to Vince when the owner died. The other, the very first accordion he ever made, was stolen from Vince's home many years ago, until a friend spotted it for sale in the

window of a San Bruno music shop. The instrument was returned to Vince, who has vowed to never let it out of his sight.

“I am eternally grateful to the San Francisco pioneers of the accordion manufacturing industry. Without their generosity and support I would not have been able to learn this fascinating trade. My life has truly been enriched by the many talented artists and kind friends that play this remarkable instrument.”

- *Vincent J. Cirelli*

Vince Cirelli passed away on September 29, 2012. The passing of this true accordion giant represents not only the loss of an accordion repair person, but the greater loss of someone who was an innovator, a master craftsman, a mentor, a historian and a true contributor to the glory days of the accordion.

Vince, you were unique! We will miss you so very much! We extend our deepest sympathy to his children Dianne Marie Smith and Vincent Felice Cirelli and their families.

Compiled by Randall Hicks

Note from Randall: Neither all of the words nor the information above are entirely original. I am indebted to three primary sources for the variety of information on the life of Vince Cirelli. The above is offered as a compilation of the best of all three sources into a summary for our Newsletter.

Not everyone may have access, but I would like to cite those sources and provide a link to their webpage where you may read the source in its entirety – not only for information about Vince, but also about the accordion industry in San Francisco during the “Golden Age.”

San Francisco Chronicle: article published August 24, 2001, Accordion Craftsman has had life-time of music making.

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Accordion-craftsman-has-had-lifetime-of-2886370.php>

Cotati Accordion Festival: Biography of the Year 2000 Honorary Director written by Vince Cirelli himself

<http://cotatifest.com/honorary-directors-past-years/137-2000-hd-10th-.html>

Sheri Mignano Crawford: Interview with Vince Cirelli July 2007

<http://cotatifest.com/honorary-directors-past-years/217-vincentcirelli-mignano-interview.html>

Nearby Club Meetings

Accordion Club of the Redwoods

3rd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
Hermann Sons Hall • 860 Western, Petaluma, CA
\$3 admission donation Contact: Tony Mustaro—
President (707) 318-0474; dcdacapo@gmail.com

Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC)

President/CEO: Carole Enneking (707) 864-2359
gsaccordionclub.net/firms.com

The Vacaville Chapter meets monthly on the second
Thursday, 6:30 p.m. at Pietro's No. 2 at 679 Merchant
Street, Vacaville, CA 95688
707 448-4588

The Humboldt Chapter meets monthly on the third
Tuesday, 7 p.m. at Humboldt Swiss Club, 5403 Tomp-
kins Hill Road, Loleta.

The Sacramento Chapter meets monthly on the fourth
Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 12401
Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova. Contact for all three
Chapters: Carole Enneking (707) 864-2359

Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC)

meets monthly on the second Wednesday, 7 p.m. at Es-
calon Community Center, 1055 Escalon Ave, Escalon.
Contact: (209) 545-3603

Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS)

meets monthly on the first Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.
at Lutheran Church Hall, 6365 Douglas, Blvd, off
Hwy 80, Granite Bay, CA. Contact: Jerry Choate
(530) 570-7318

Silicon Valley Accordion Club (SVAC)

meets 1st Sun. of each month at Harry's Hofbrau,
390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose, corner of Kiely.
1 p.m. \$5, under 16 - no charge.

Accordion Instruction

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Peter Di Bono (415) 753-1502
Lynn Ewing (650) 453-3391
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Lou Jacklich (510) 317-9510
Marjorie Konrad (707) 539-5308
Marian Kelly (650) 854-1896
Vincent Rinaldi (415) 824-7609
Big Lou (Linda Seekins) (415) 468 5986
Joe Simoni (650) 867-1122
Sharon Walters-Greyhosky (650) 731-6010
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**Join us on (almost every!) third sunday of the month
at the Oyster Point Yacht Club, 911 Marina Blvd, South San Francisco**

Club & Musical Meeting • next meeting Oct. 21 @ 2 p.m.

DIRECTIONS:

From 101 traveling either North or South, take the Oyster Point exit. Turn right onto Marina Blvd. (be careful not to turn right onto Gull Drive, just before Marina Blvd.) Continue past the gate house to the sign Oyster Point Yacht Club. There is plenty of parking and ramp access.

Visit us online @ www.sfaccordionclub.com

P A R K I N G N O T I C E

The new Ferry Terminal is now operational, and parking behind the yacht club is again possible.

**PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE
Commodore's designated space!**

SFAC Membership is

\$30.00 per year for individual or family.
Meeting admission is \$6 per member & \$8 per guest. For membership renewal, please send a check to: S.F.A.C., c/o Mike Zampiceni, PO box 62484, Sunnyvale, CA 94088
NEW MEMBERS, please include your name and address along with your check, as well as a phone number and email address, if you wish.

**Newsletter of the
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