

September, 2025

Sunday, September 21, 2025

♪ SFAC Accordions Live! ♪

The Reno DiBono Trio

THE SFAC "JAM BAND" WILL GATHER
BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Chetcuti Community Room - Millbrae, CA

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

\$10 members / \$15 non-members

Exact change appreciated

Youth free with parent



Reno Di Bono grew up in San Francisco, graduating from Sacred Heart High School. In the 1950's, Reno's father Tony, along with his two sons Reno and Peter, enrolled in the Dino Benetti Accordion School in San Francisco. They all played Giulietti accordions and performed in the summer accordion picnics at Wildwood Park in Saratoga, CA.



After high school, Reno attended Santa Clara University on a baseball scholarship. Reno became a high school teacher and baseball coach, but at the age of 33 he gave up coaching to devote more time to the accordion. Eventually, retirement from teaching school gave Reno even more time.

Reno's specialty is Italian music and his repertoire includes over 30 Italian songs that he can sing in their native Sicilian, Neapolitan or Piemontese dialects. He has played at Italian weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and even a few funerals. Reno has produced two CDs: *Songs of My Father* (Italian) and *The Jazz Accordion*.

At over 80, Reno is still actively performing, arranging and teaching.



The San Francisco Accordion Club is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization [EIN 94-3148553] whose purpose is to enhance, promote and stimulate an appreciation for the accordion within the membership and throughout the general public. Donations are tax-deductible and gratefully accepted by using the **Donate** button at www.sfaccordionclub.com

Reflections on the SFAC Presence at the Cotati Accordion Festival 2025

By Robert Cooperstein

The SFAC Board began discussions months ago about changing the function and staffing of our canopy at Cotati. Bottom line, those of us who year after year had presided over taking donations for accordion-themed stuff (mostly figurines) and sheet music, as fond as we had become of our menagerie, felt like experiencing the festival in a different way this year. From our canopy we could not appreciate the wonderful musicians on the main stage, although we were awash in the music emanating from Ray's Deli Stage, performed by people we could not see. This year the SFAC would appear as accordion revelers rather than accordion shopkeepers.

So this year our canopy was devoid of figurines and sheet music, much to the chagrin of a few festival goers who converged on our booth on arrival, early birds hoping to score the best stuff. Alas, all they encountered were mere people, at first me and Elaine - and Ted Hill, associated with Gordon Kohl's canopy right next to ours, who really liked our chairs and company. Regrettably, Rosemary, who has been the most energetic and passionate face of the SFAC over the years, could not make it this year. Likewise, President Ken was unable to attend.

Our canopy experience unfolded *exactly* as we had hoped it would. Elaine and I, who this year were the most responsible for this canopy qua clubhouse, got to enjoy the festival at large, wandering at will wherever the wind took us. And lots of Club members also popped in and out – Joseph, Casey, Pam, Xavier, Tony, Colette, Mike, Tibor, Pamela, the Steves (Mobia and Marshall), Paul, Monica, and a couple of Club members who heretofore had only been name on a spreadsheet to me. Erecting the tent and tearing it down were easy enough, with less stuff to worry about. Many thanks to Joseph and Colette who delivered the canopy, tables, and chairs. And our former San Leandro neighbor Christine, who will store some chairs and tables for us until Elaine and I come in from Florida for next year's CAF.



Make sure to read Pamela Tom's and Mike Noferi's articles about the CASS (Cotati Accordion Student Stage) in this newsletter, on pages 4-5.

There were after-hour dinners at Volpi's Restaurant on Friday night and CIBO Rustica Pizzeria on Saturday night. I feel so privileged getting to take part in these! There was less-than-usual accordion-playing on Friday night – thankfully,



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Mike Zampiceni held down the fort. On the other hand, Saturday night at CIBO was otherworldly, with solo and duo sets featuring Steve Albini, Cory Pesaturo, Ginny Mac, and Tamás Kéméndi (Hungarian, on tour, his first trip to the US.)

I was seated next to the delightful Agnes Effron, a student of Gail Campanella and member of the Accordion Lovers Society International (ALSI), the club out of San Diego. We heard from Agnes and other ALSI members that they were considering a name change, having realized their club is not a society nor is it international. We know how that happens. Voltaire said the Holy Roman Empire was “neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.” Adapting the phrase as a former pathology teacher, I used to pontificate that the reticuloendothelial system (a collection of white blood cells, part of the immune system) was not reticular, nor endothelial, nor a system.

Who knows? We may decide to placate the throng of figurine and sheet music lovers next year by bring back some items, maybe get enough help staffing the canopy to permit more wandering about the hallowed accordion fields of La Playa Park. Hope to see you there!



SFAC members—Saturday
Photo by Steve Mobia



SFAC members—Sunday
Photo by Steve Mobia

Cotati Accordion Student Stage – A Word of Thanks

David Noferi



David Noferi (back row) with 2025 CASS students.
Photo Credit: Natasha Lyukevich

As the CASS director, I want to express my gratitude for everyone's efforts to help us realize record donations exceeding \$3200 for the 2025 CASS program. This is the first year we covered our expenses and outflow of awards funds - amazing! This sum is in addition to the \$500 from the **San Francisco Accordion Club**, and contributions from **Judy Campbell-Contino** for the Contino Scholarship (\$1500) and travel stipends (~ \$1000). About \$5400 was dispersed among eight students.

The on-going **San Francisco Accordion Club Scholarship** contribution

to the CASS program is greatly appreciated. This year, the SFAC's added contribution of figurines which sold like hot-cakes. Additionally, the music books/flash drives used at the Jam Tent brought a huge bonus in sales.

A big thank you to Judy Campbell-Contino who has assumed a prominent supporting role of our CASS program. Her generous support ensures our ability to promote our program more effectively.

Our volunteers' time and sacrifice are sorely needed and appreciated. SFAC members **[in boldface font]** had a key role in supporting the CASS. Volunteers in the Jam Tent included: Barb and Vic Corsiglia, Dennis Dowling, Bob Flournoy, Ted Kuster, **Joseph Martin** and Chris Thomas. Festival goers with their accordions and other instruments had fun playing music from the Golden State Accordion Club Jam Book. The Jam Book had a major revision through the donated resources and services of **Heidi Seratan** and **Joseph Martin**. It was a 10-month project for Joseph Martin to format and produce the revised Jam Books. (You had to play previously in the tent to understand how complex this project of mixed editions was.) Outside the Jam Tent George Bachich educated attendees about the inner workings of an accordion and accordion repair on his accordion autopsy table. Numerous attendees participated in our raffle and accordion-related sales assisted by **Chris Boris**, Sheri Mignano Crawford, **Xavier de la Prade**, Chris Thomas, and Joan Traverso. Numerous accordion artists' LPs and CDs were available at nominal rates. Thanks to **Lorna Anderson** and others for their donations which help broaden appreciation of the accordion beyond the festival! Of course this includes accordion donations from Bob Flournoy, Bobby Dietsch and several others who wish to remain anonymous.

We greatly appreciate the technical assistance of **Anand Joseph** who set up and maintains the CASS YouTube Channel for showcasing student entries each year.

We acknowledge the teachers who encourage and guide their students to participate in our CASS program annually. Their participation and support are a vital lifeline to our future student participation. Thank you for guiding your students!

The program would not be complete without the students who make the CASS program a success. Those of us who see your participation in multiple years get to experience the year-to-year improvement and growth. We hope the experience is as rewarding to you as it is for us.

Thank you, students, for practicing and competing: **Jennifer Aruldass**, **Mackenzie Freschi**, **Colin Kennedy**, Olivia Ma, Rio Navarro, Michael Rogers, **Annabelle Selvaraj**, and Peter Swanson.

To parents who support their child's participation with their practice and lesson regimen throughout the year, your

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dedication to their accordion journey is evident in successful results. Thank you for introducing your child to music!

To those who participate in our Friday fundraiser concert each year, your time and efforts are entertaining, thoughtful and a very special contribution to our CASS program. Some of you travel from out of state, which is extra special. Thank you to this year's participants: Sheri Mignano Crawford & Steve Hanson, Paul Betken, Lou DiMaggio and Mario Pedone!

To the anonymous judges who dedicate an extraordinary amount of time to assure our adjudication process is held to a high standard, a heartfelt thank you!

We greatly appreciate and thank the Church of the Oaks' Pat McCarty for support and use of the social hall for our activities.

To the founder of the CASS program, Sheri Mignano Crawford – Thank you!

Last but not least, many thanks to the Cotati Festival organizers. Your platform allows the CASS program to succeed!

If you would like to volunteer, make a donation, or receive information on the 2026 CASS application due date and rules visit the Cotati Accordion Student Stage web site for information: cotatifest.com/performers/student-stage/

Our work is not done. Onwards to next year!

Student Accordionists Shine at Cotati

Pamela Tom

There were eight talented California participants in the 2025 Cotati Accordion Student Stage program. Each young accordionist diligently rehearsed and performed four accordion compositions that were posted on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) and adjudicated. Students were divided among two groups: ages 12 and under, & ages 13-18. The younger group included: Jennifer Aruldass, Olivia Ma, Michael Rogers, and Annabelle Selvaraj. The older group included Mckenzie Freschi, Colin Kennedy, Rio Navarro, and Peter Swanson. Congratulations to Peter Swanson, our SFAC \$500 Scholarship winner!



Students from left to right: Michael Rogers, Peter Swanson, Rio Navarro, Colin Kennedy, Jennifer Aruldass, Annabelle Selvaraj and Mckenzie Freschi. (Not pictured, Olivia Ma.)

Photo: Natasha Lyukevich

Mike Zampiceni with his students who participated in the 2025 CASS program.

Row one, left to right: Jennifer Aruldass, Mike Z., and Annabelle Selvaraj. Back row: Mackenzie Freschi and Colin Kennedy.

Photo: Natasha Lyukevich





Monica Ambalal Earns UCSC Doctorate in Musicology



Monica Ambalal, PhD on commencement day

On June 11, 2025 the University of California, Santa Cruz conferred the Doctor of Philosophy degree on SFAC member Monica Ambalal.

Monica's doctorate is in the field of musicology with a designated emphasis in anthropology. Her dissertation "The History and Sustainability of the Piano-Accordion by Italian Immigrant Communities in the San Francisco Bay Area" explores the cultural legacy and ongoing relevance of the instrument within this unique community. The full dissertation is available via the Internet at <https://escholarship.org>.

Monica offers sincere thanks to members of the San Francisco Bay Area accordion community who contributed to and supported her research (Paul Cain, Reno Di Bono, the Aruldass family, Colin Kennedy, Valdet Jakubovich, the Piatanesi family, Vince Cirelli Jr., Lou DiMaggio, Arleen Johnson, Dominic Palmisano, and Don Savant).

Many of the contacts, meetings, and interviews that shaped her work were made possible through the assistance of SFAC members.

Special appreciation goes to Pamela Tom, Dr. Ambalal's West Coast interlocutor, whose guidance was instrumental in the early stages.

Gratitude is also due to her late accordion instructor, Lou Jacklich, and the late Ed Massolo, for their insight and encouragement throughout the project. Dr. Ambalal greatly values the time she was fortunate to share with each of them over the past few years.

Congratulations, Dr. Monica Ambalal, PhD! Well done!

Sports Basement Meetup - How to Join?

Want to be added to the email list for details about the upcoming Accordion Meet-Ups in San Francisco? Send us word if there is a remote possibility that you can make one of these very informal jam sessions - you can be added to the email list to find out when the next gathering will be. Meet-Ups will begin again in either September or October, it largely depends on the space availability and the availability of participants. The meetups are held on the 5th floor at the **Sports Basement** on Bryant Street, San Francisco. Parking is free.

This photo was taken at the July meet-up, where 6 of us got together and played a little music.



Pictured: Curtis, Tony, Rosemary, Joseph & Harshini (not pictured is Roy)

Ben Rosenblum Brazilian Quartet

Friday, September 12 - 7:30 - 10pm PDT (Doors at 6:30pm)

The Sound Room
3022 Broadway
Oakland, CA

Tickets \$30.65 (including fees) <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ben-rosenblum-brazilian-quartet-tickets-1531298869139?aff=oddtcreator>



NYC-based pianist/accordionist Ben Rosenblum will bring his brand new Brazilian quartet to the West Coast, featuring two of the most in-demand Brazilian musicians in the U.S., 7-string guitarist Cesar Garabini, and bassist Eduardo Belo, as well as Rosenblum's long-time collaborator, Ben Zweig, on drums. Drawing from a repertoire that includes classics from many different eras and styles of Brazilian music, as well as Rosenblum's own award-winning original compositions, the band will take the listener on a journey through samba, bossa, choro, forró, MPB, and a wide variety of Brazilian jazz and Afro-Brazilian rhythms.



Ben Rosenblum has traversed a truly unique musical path, one that has seen him perform alongside world-class musicians across more than twenty music genres and twenty-five countries, lead bands at prestigious venues across the world, all while maintaining a signature, melodic musical voice. Rosenblum's journey has taken him on tours with Grammy-winning pop artist Rickie Lee Jones, Grammy-winning jazz vocalist Catherine Russell and Juno-winning contemporary Indian singer Kiran Ahluwalia. He's played Brazilian choro with Ephrat Asherie Dance and Brazilian forró with The Late

Night Show's Nêgah Santos and famed forró band Forró in the Dark. His roots in jazz have led to an over ten-year relationship with Grammy-winning bassist Curtis Lundy, performing at festivals alongside jazz luminaries Bobby Watson, Sean Jones and Warren Wolf. He has appeared with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra on accordion, and as a guest soloist on piano at Carnegie Hall's Stern-Perelman Auditorium with Maestro Reona Ito's New York Harmonic Band. Throughout it all, Rosenblum has always maintained the same priority - to tell a compelling story with his music, reaching the hearts of his audience and connecting on an emotional, intellectual and spiritual level.

Membership Report

by Robert Cooperstein

Let us welcome our newest new member, **Jonathan Napier-Morales** of San Francisco. I have asked Jonathan to provide some info about himself and hopefully a photo, that would appear in a future newsletter.

Very shortly, I will be sending out my first request to renew your membership in the SFAC. You will be able to renew either online or by mailing a check. The several individuals who are already paid in full until renewal year 2026 will be notified in advance of this first request that they need not renew.

As we discussed in recent months' newsletters, the membership renewal mailing will also include an opportunity for you to opt in to an SFAC Directory. The only information we would need from you is your approval to be included, as well as which of the following contact information you would be willing to share: full name, first name only, email address, phone number, full residential address, city & state only. Once it is created, the directory, in paper format, will be shared among those who opted in.



July 27, 2025 Picnic in the Park

SFAC members' directory of contact info

We are thrilled that the SFAC has recently gained many new members, some accordion newbies and other older players with renewed interest. To help build community, we plan to compile a member directory, available to members only, inclusion in which would be purely optional. Imagine how much easier it would be to find a nearby accordion enthusiast to arrange a carpool to a club meeting, or to an accordion related event, or set up an at-home jam session to play a tune or two together in your own space. You get the idea! For security reasons this directory will be distributed in a print edition only.

The only information we will need from you is your approval to be included, as well as which of the following contact information you are willing to share: first name, last name, email address, phone number, full residential address or city/state only. The request for you to opt-in or opt-out of the directory will arrive in September with the annual dues notice. Once created, the directory will be shared among all those who opted in.

The plan is to distribute the printed Club directory early in 2026



**September is known for the transition to Autumn.
It is the Harvest Month.**

Accordion Happenings

Oct. 4, 2-4 PM. LA Accordionaires Pops Orchestra with Peter Swanson and Rio Navarro as special guest artists performing their 2025 Cotati Accordion Student Stage programs. Club-house 4 – Leisure World, 1419 Northwood Rd., Seal Beach, CA 90740. Contact: David Noferi, E-mail: dnoferi@aol.com

Online/Virtual Events:

Free-Bass Masterclass

Sundays, September 28 - November 2, 3pm EST

Accordionist Joe Natoli, who presented a Zoom concert for the SFAC in July 2021, is offering a free-bass masterclass series this fall via the Internet, \$40 (GR8 IDEAS members) or \$55 (GR8 IDEAS nonmembers) per session (6 sessions available). Each Sunday from September 28 through November 2, 2025 at 3pm EST, Joe will conduct a 2-hour masterclass on Zoom for both digital and acoustic accordionists who have a free-bass system on their instrument. All Roland, Bugari, and Korg digital instruments possess the free-bass configurations taught in this course. The course is designed for beginners and there are no prerequisites. Participants will understand and be playing free-bass before the series ends. For registration details visit: www.gr8ideas.org. To request a course syllabus or more information contact Joe via email: thegr8.ideas@gmail.com.

Monthly: 1st & 3rd Monday - Joseph Natoli

JANPress University - Topics vary monthly (\$) janpressmusic@yahoo.com

Monthly: 2nd Tuesday 4:30-6:30 PM (free)

Hosted by Laura Niland LauraJNiland@outlook.com

Members -

If you know of an accordion-centric festival or event in 2025-26 that your fellow SFAC members may be interested in, please contact us at info@sfaccordionclub.org



Kimric Smythe

442 Petaluma Blvd North
Petaluma, California 95952

Noon-6pm Wed, Fri, Sat
Noon-8pm Thurs

510-268-4084
smytheaccordion@gmail.com



Rare Opportunity!

Pancordion played by Myron Floren during the 1960 Season of the Welk Show. Later owned and maintained by his sister, Val Floren Brewer.

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Contact Jan Brewer for more details: (916) 987-1727



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Email: Paul@AccordionInfo.com



Ron Borelli, Accordionist

Contact information:

- Email: RONBORELLI@AOL.COM
- WEBSITE: RONBORELLI.COM
- TEXT/PHONE: 415-203-6700

We continue to seek volunteers to assist with writing our monthly event summaries. Please feel free to contact us at

Searching for *Lou Soper's Easy Musical Chord Retention Method, Volumes One & Two*

If your collection of sheet music includes these volumes, please let us know. It would be greatly appreciated.

info@sfaccordionclub.com

SFAC Newsletter Ad Policy

Members may place 1/8-page (business-card size) free of charge for one month each year.

Additional ads are \$10/issue or \$100/year.

Monthly ad prices **for members**:

1/8 page: \$10; 1/4-page: \$25; 1/2-page: \$50; Full-page: \$100.

Non-member rates are double.

Contact info@sfaccordionclub.com

SFAC Members Performing Around the Bay

RON BORELLI San Mateo - RonBorelli@aol.com
www.ronborelli.com

JOE DOMITROWICH Entire SF Bay Area –
Joe@JoeDLive.com or www.JoeDLive.com

ED GORZYNSKI, JR. East Bay -
edspolkas@yahoo.com

PAMELA TOM Yolo & Solano Counties
accordionpam@gmail.com

MIKE ZAMPICENI East Bay & South Bay
eclecticguy@comcast.net, www.mikezamp.com

SFAC Board & Key Club Functions

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Kenneth.E.Schwartz@gmail.com

Rosemary Busher, Vice-President
(510) 220-2931, rosemary@busher.org

Paul Cain paulrussellcain@gmail.com

Robert Cooperstein (510) 207-6009, drrcoop@sbcglobal.net

Elaine Cooperstein (510) 921-9323, elainedc@sbcglobal.net

Randall Hicks (510) 750-6858, hickr01@sprintmail.com

Dominic Palmisano (Honorary) accord47@gmail.com

Scholarship Awards:

Mike Zampiceni (408) 569-2579, eclecticguy@comcast.net

Webmaster & Bookkeeping: Randall Hicks

Newsletter: Elaine & Robert Cooperstein, Pamela Tom, Rosemary Busher, Ken Schwartz (*and credited contributors each issue*)

Accordion Rentals: Rosemary Busher

Live Meeting Sound & Amplification: Paul Cain

Live Meeting Zoom Camera & Sound: Ken Schwartz

Membership: Robert Cooperstein

Event Photography: Steve Mobia

🎵 Appreciation for SFAC Donors! 🎵

Sincere Thanks to those who generously donate to support the SFAC. These members have made donations during our current (October 2024 – September 2025) membership year:

Paul Aebersold, Lorna Anderson, Scott Anderson, Ron Borelli, Paul Cain, Gail Campanella, Raymond Celentano, Robert & Elaine Cooperstein, Edward Crnich, Xavier and Candace de la Prade, Ed Gorzynski, Jr.; Arleen Johnson, Jerry Keifer, Pamela Lister, Linda Lonay, Franco & Susan & Lorenzo Lucchesi, Natalie Lyukevich, Nora Mazzara, Gerald McMahon, Steve Mobia, Laura Jean Niland, Colette Ogata, David Perry, Robert D. & Dil Pisani, Diana Prurucker, Rich Rinaldi, Tibor Sarkany, Don & Mary Savant, Kenneth Schwartz, James E. Shoemaker, Bill & Gloria Tapogna; Pamela Tom, Jane & Frank Tripi, Frank Venturelli, Barbara Winter

If you have donated and your name doesn't appear here, please contact elainedc@sbcglobal.net. We so appreciate the support and want to be sure you are recognized.

SFAC Scholarships

Your Club has scholarship funds available to support accordion students studying with teachers who are SFAC members in good standing. Preference is given to students who demonstrate dedication to pursuing the study of the accordion.

Contact **Mike Zampiceni** eclecticguy@comcast.net for a scholarship application.

ACCORDION INSTRUCTION

East Bay

- ◆ **Joel Weber**
www.joelstbayacordionlessons.weebly.com/
- ◆ **Mike Zampiceni*** www.mikezamp.com

Peninsula/South Bay

- ◆ **Joe Simoni*** jsimoni2000@gmail.com, 650-867-1122
- ◆ **Mike Zampiceni*** www.mikezamp.com

Outside the Bay Area

- ◆ **Gail Campanella*** GailCampanella@gmail.com 805-895-0457 (Santa Barbara)
- ◆ **Bonnie Birch*** www.bonniebirch.com (Seattle)
- ◆ **Pamela Tom*** accordionpam@gmail.com (Davis)

* = remote lessons (Zoom, Facetime) available

San Francisco Accordion Club

Newsletter

c/o Cooperstein

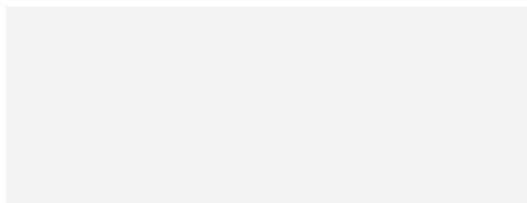
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Upcoming Events: *September 21* The Reno DiBono Trio *Live, in-person - Chetcuti Community Center!*

October 19 Piedmont High School - Accordion Circle Student Center, Building B

SFAC Sunday Program

September 21, 2025

Chetcuti Community Room - Millbrae, CA

The Reno DiBono Trio

\$10 members / \$15 non-members

Youth free with parent

Chetcuti doors open at 2:00 PM, performances

begin approximately 2:15 PM

See email for link to online streaming

See email for details, or

contact info@sfaccordionclub.com



Chetcuti Community Room

450 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae

Plenty of **free parking in Library lot**

Accessible location

Close to public transit (<1 mile from BART)

<https://www.facebook.com/SanFranciscoAccordionClub/>

