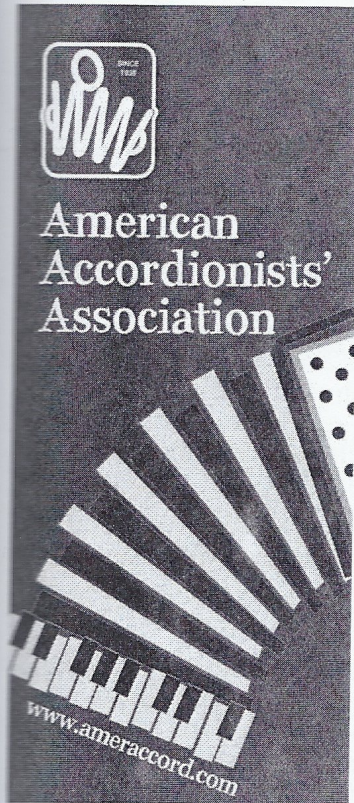


Faithé Deffner Accordion Competition 2015 Contestants



**Aleksandar Bojic
Emmanuel Gasser
Jeon Haein
Vitaly Kondratenko
Junhao Mao
Rachel Quirbach
Siyu Zhu**

Faithé Deffner: A Personal Remembrance

I first met Faithé in the late 1960s, nearing the end of my competing years in the AAA national competitions in New York, Chicago, and my hometown of Washington DC. Our infrequent conversations from that time were mainly about building an original contemporary repertoire for classical accordion and comparisons between the newly popular chromatic and older Titano “quint” free bass systems (the latter of which she obviously favored, being the head of that company).

Playing at that time, and for the first time, a Giuliani accordion, with side-by-side stradella and chromatic free bass systems (which I still play almost 50 years later!), after having had two non-free bass Titanos in my intermediate and early advanced levels of study with my teacher, Lou Coppola, may have cooled our relationship somewhat (for I had as cordial a relationship with Julio Giuliani as I did with Faithé).

Through the latter 1970s and early 1990s I had little or no connection with the AAA and had only sporadic contacts with Julio. I saw Faithé for the first time in almost twenty years at a dinner following a concert by Myron Floren and Daniel Desiderio at Cape May Court House, NJ, around 1994. I was there to interview Floren for an article I was writing for the short-lived CUNY Free Reed Journal regarding his relationship with William

Grant Still and the latter’s AAA commissioned work *Aria*. This was shortly after I had contacted the Chair of the AAA Composers Commissioning Committee, Elsie Bennett. Elsie soon recommended me to the AAA Board due to my interest in commissioning new music for the accordion.

At that time Faithé was President of the AAA. Hence our relationship was resurrected after a lacuna of almost two decades. Anyone who knew Faithé remembers that she was a person of strong convictions and opinions and was passionately willing to defend her views, gloves off, with anyone.

However, she was also an equally passionate friend to us all, no matter how much of a fire-breathing argument she might have had with any of us minutes earlier. I was particularly warmed by her unswerving support of new commissions for the accordion—the main purpose for my returning to the AAA after my long absence from that “home”. I need not remind anyone how vitally important Faithé was to the accordion industry and all aspects of the accordion world. She has left a giant hole in that universe which can only be filled by the many who were inspired and awed by her undying commitment and love of our instrument.

Bob McMahan