



AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION

# Newsletter

The official membership publication of the American Accordionists' Association

January/February 2023

## From the Editor

### Welcome to the January/February 2023 Edition of the AAA Newsletter!

As we welcome the autumn weather, we hope you are enjoying a variety of performances and accordion events, either in person or online.

The excitement builds as we rapidly approach the AAA's first live event in some time, our annual AAA Competition and Festival, celebrating the 85th Anniversary of the organization. Featuring guest artist performers from the USA and abroad, workshops, the Festival Orchestra, an exciting new commissioned work, exhibits and other exciting activities, the festival will be held at the Marriott Philadelphia West in Conshohocken, PA from July 12-16, 2023. You'll find updated information online at [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com).

My sincere thanks to our Newsletter Publisher, AAA President Frank Busso, Jr. As always, I would also like to thank our Secretary Rita Barnea for her outstanding work in helping source accordion events and news items to include in our Newsletter publications.

Items for the March-April 2023 Newsletter can be sent to me at [ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com). Please include 'AAA Newsletter' in the subject box, so that we don't miss any items that come in. As always, text should be sent within the email or as a Microsoft Word attachment if possible. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg file (or similar) and the larger the file size the better. We can always reduce/crop the picture if necessary, however we are unable to increase the quality from smaller pictures. Please send your items as soon as possible to ensure they are included in the upcoming issue.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Friedrich, AAA Newsletter Editor - [ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com)



**Mark your calendars!**

**AAA Festival - July 12-16, 2023**

**Marriott Philadelphia West**

**111 Crawford Avenue**

**Conshohocken, PA 19428**

**(610) 941-5600**

Guest Artists   Concerts   Workshops   Competitions   Orchestras  
Exhibits   Lifetime Achievement Award to Frank Busso Sr   ...and More!

**Special "accordion festival" room rate, includes parking**

## Meet your New AAA Executive Committee Members

As 2023 begins, we offer our sincere thanks to our outgoing President Dr. Joseph A. Ciccone, who led the American Accordionists' Association from 2019-2022. As we do so, we welcome and introduce to you the officers who will lead the AAA as the new Executive Committee for 2023-2024.

**President:** Frank Busso Jr has served on the AAA board of directors since 2007 and as the organization's 2nd Vice President since 2021. He is the director of the Ernest Deffner Affiliates, whose brands include Titano, PANcordion, Pignini, Excelsior, Roland, and Hohner. Frank is the accordionist for The United States Air Force Band in Washington, DC and runs the Busso Music School in Alexandria, VA. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Boston University, later serving as an instructor and arranger with the Boston University Athletic Bands. Frank studied accordion with Frank Busso Sr at the Staten Island Music School in New York, eventually becoming an instructor there, where his students earned many regional and national titles in competition.



**1st Vice President:** Frank Busso Sr has served on the governing board of the American Accordionists' Association for over 45 years. He has held the offices of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Treasurer. Frank started studying and playing accordion at age 7. Since then, he has achieved great successes as a performer throughout the New York metropolitan area. As director of the Staten Island Music School in New York, Frank taught many award-winning students and conducted numerous classical & festival accordion orchestras. He was also the music teacher at two parochial schools for over 25 years. Currently a resident of northern Virginia and Palm Beach, Florida, Frank continues to perform and arrange orchestral works.



**2nd Vice President:** Sam Falcetti graduated from the University of Hartford with a degree in Theory & Composition. In the 70s and 80s, he was an adjunct professor at Westfield State University and Holyoke Community College, where he had an accordion ensemble that twice performed at Carnegie Hall. As a conductor, Sam's Springfield Accordion Orchestra was invited to perform at the World's Fair in Osaka, Japan and also toured Italy performing concerts. As an entrepreneur, he founded Falcetti Music, a 60-year eight-store music chain in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. Today, Sam is involved in teaching over 30 digital accordion players at Falcetti Music and online. He is also a Roland V-Accordion dealer and conducts the 20-member New England Digital Accordion Orchestra, performing at major events in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Sam is a past president and charter member of the Accordion Teachers Association of Massachusetts, an honorary member of the Massachusetts Accordion Association, and a past officer and member of the AAA since the 70s. In 2019, he was awarded the first International Scholar Award at the "IDEAS Symposium" in Ohio.



**Secretary:** Rita Davidson Barnea is an honors graduate of the University of Connecticut, having received a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education, and has been a member of the AAA board for many years. For over 14 years, Rita has served as the national editor of [accordionusa.com](http://accordionusa.com), covering accordion artists, concerts, and other events taking place in North America. She presents workshops and concerts on "The Life and Music of Eugene Ettore," "The Use of the Accordion in the Teaching of Music in School," and "How to Organize a Children's Birthday Party" centered around the use of the accordion. Rita has adjudicated for many accordion competitions over the years, and performed in concerts, for workshops, and at accordion festivals throughout the USA. She retired from a 30-year career as a public school music teacher in West Orange, New Jersey, where she used her accordion every day in the classroom and as an accompanist for concerts and programs. Rita is the creator and curator of the Eugene Ettore Memorial Website, which contains photos, articles, and other valuable information about Eugene Ettore, prominent accordionist and composer.



**Treasurer:** Ray Oreggia has been an American Accordionists' Association governing board member for several years and has served as the organization's Treasurer since 2017. He studied accordion under one of the AAA's founding members, Joe Biviano. Ray received a Bachelor of Science degree in Life Science from the New Institute of Technology. Over the years, he has performed at countless venues and with numerous ensembles and orchestras of varied instrumentation. Ray has been a strong supporter of the Long Island Accordion Alliance since its inception in 2010.



## From the President

Greetings, AAA members! As our nation continues to reintroduce itself to live events, I am so excited for what the accordion community will accomplish in 2023. Already in the planning stages are our 85th anniversary festival this summer, online workshops, our Carrozza Scholarship fundraiser in the fall, new commissioned works, expanded social media presence, and more!

I invite you to become a member for the first time, renew your membership, donate to AAA programs that are most meaningful to you, explore our website, interact with us on social media, and most of all, to join us for our upcoming events to celebrate and promote our beloved instrument.

Our flagship event, AAA's annual competition and festival, will be July 12-16, 2023 at the Marriott Philadelphia West in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. It will feature world-class entertainers, workshops, competition for performers of all ages, exhibits, two festival orchestras, the presentation of the AAA Lifetime Achievement Award to Frank Busso Sr, and other exciting activities. We hope you can join us!

I look forward to seeing you soon, and playing with you, too!

Very best musical wishes,  
Frank Busso Jr, AAA President



## 2023 AAA Festival - Celebrate 85 Years with us!

Save the date for this special event as the AAA celebrates its 85th anniversary! The festival will be held at the Marriott Philadelphia West in Conshohocken, PA, July 12-16, 2023.

We are sure we speak for all when we say accordionists cannot wait to get back together – in person! – to celebrate our beloved instrument. And speaking of accordions, make sure you bring yours along to play in the 2023 Festival Orchestra, conducted by world-renowned conductor, Joan Cochran Sommers!

Grayson Masefield (New Zealand) will join us for performances and workshops. Very personable and well-spoken, Grayson has won and been laureate at over a dozen international accordion competitions around the world in classical, entertainment, and digital categories. He is currently the instrumental music teacher for accordion at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Another special guest will be accordion legend Joey Miskulin (USA). Inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2018 for his extraordinary accomplishments with the piano accordion, and a recent recipient of the AAA's Lifetime Achievement Award, Joey continues to delight listeners with his "flying fingers" and ability to engage audiences.

Conducting this year's Youth Orchestra will be Joanna Darrow, who has dedicated her entire life to performing, teaching, and promoting the accordion. She has performed several times with the Philadelphia Orchestra and performed all over Europe for over 30 years with her accordion teacher/husband, the late Stanley Darrow.

At our festival's Saturday night banquet, the AAA will award its coveted Lifetime Achievement Award to longtime AAA Board member Frank Busso Sr. Frank has been an educator, performer, conductor, and all-around ambassador of the accordion for decades.

Keep checking [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com) for announcements of additional performers, workshop presenters, events, and registration information!



Joan Cochran Sommers



Grayson Masefield



Joey Miskulin



Joanna Darrow



Frank Busso Sr.

## AAA Composition Competition

The AAA cordially invites participation from accordionists and non-accordionists alike in the 2023 Elsie M. Bennett Accordion Composition Competition to contribute to the growth of contemporary concert works for solo accordion or for the accordion being featured with other instruments.

Elsie Bennett established the AAA Composers' Commissioning Committee in 1954. As its chairperson, she succeeded in commissioning 55 works from 33 composers, many of whom were world famous.

Entries are welcome from all countries, and the competition closing date is June 1, 2023. Winners will be notified by email after July 1, 2023.

For full details, including information on composing for the accordion, competition rules, previous commissions and more, please see the Upcoming Events link at [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com).



## AAA selects Antonio Spaccarotella (Italy) for New Commissioned Work

Italian composer and accordionist Antonio Spaccarotella has been chosen by the AAA Composers' Commissioning Committee to write a new work for accordion, adding to an impressive array of repertoire commissioned by the American Accordionists' Association.

Despite his relatively young age, Antonio Spaccarotella is among the most brilliant and multifaceted accordionists of the new generation. He has led numerous performance projects ranging from solo to symphony orchestra in over 30 countries. Antonio is the Production Director of the OFC Calabrian Philharmonic Orchestra and supports its leader Filippo Arlia for all productions, collaborations, recordings, and projects.

In 2017, Antonio made his debut as a soloist at the Kaunas Philharmonic (Lithuania) on the occasion of the world premiere of Skrya Horizontal Tango, an original composition for accordion and symphony orchestra that embodies his personal idea of research and avant-garde accordion. He is involved in various higher education institutes in Italy and abroad, holding seminars and master classes at: Shanghai Normal University (China), Department of Music of the Federal University of Paraiba (Brazil), Conservatoire National de Musique et Art Coreographique de Rabat (Morocco), Stanislao Giacomantonio State Conservatory of Music (Italy), the prestigious Gnessin Academy of Moscow (Russia), and Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music (Italy) where he has also conducted the Philharmonic Orchestra of Calabria.



In 2016, the Italian Accordion Culture nominated him Accordion Ambassador for his many achievements and enhancement of the Italian accordion to the world. In 2017, the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (International Music Council – UNESCO) awarded him the CIA Merit Award along with Yuri Shiskin at the CIA Coupe Mondiale in Rostov on Don (Russia), and in 2018, he was awarded honorary professorship by the National Academy S. Rachmaninov – Rostov State Music Conservatory (Russia).

Antonio is one of the seven members elected by the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) Congress to be a member of the prestigious Music Committee. He is professor of classical and traditional accordion at the Tchaikovsky Catanzaro-Nocera Terinese

State Conservatory of Music and founding president of the Astor Piazzolla Academy, the first and exclusive academy in the world of the Astor Piazzolla Foundation of Buenos Aires, directed by Laura Escalada Piazzolla.

The new work will be premiered by world champion accordionist Grayson Masefield at the 2023 AAA Festival, with the composer himself in attendance.

## AAA Composers' Commissioning Committee, by Dr. Robert Young McMahan



In the mid-1940s, a newly married young woman, accordionist Elsie Bennett (nee Blum), moved with her groom from her native Detroit to his native Brooklyn, where they settled and established a music school in their new home on Empire Boulevard. Elsie had been pursuing a bachelor's degree in music theory back home at Wayne State University when she met her future husband, Mort Bennett. To complete her degree, she took transferable courses in orchestration and composition at Columbia University. Soon thereafter, Elsie pursued a master's degree at Columbia and was allowed to use accordion as her principal instrument. However, she had to rely on classical transcriptions of major works by composers of the past for most of her "traditional" repertoire, which was permitted due to the lack of reputable original works for accordion from the nineteenth century, when the instrument was invented and still going through its early evolutionary stages.

Regarding contemporary repertoire, the problem was even greater, and Elsie found it difficult to find acceptable original or transcribed compositions by notable composers of the twentieth century to satisfy that part of her final recital requirements. To help solve this problem for Elsie and future aspiring classical accordionists, her principal professor and advisor, distinguished composer and electronic music pioneer Otto Luening, informed her that the accordion would probably never gain a sizable original repertoire of significance from recognized composers until the latter were commissioned and paid to write for it.

Having recently joined the governing board of the then-15-year-old AAA, Elsie invited her mentor to speak at its next meeting with the aim of convincing its members to recognize this need and commence to commission worthy composers. The board voted to create a composers' commissioning committee, with Elsie serving as its chair. Elsie took on the charge with great passion and three years later, in 1957, succeeded in persuading the internationally-famous New York composer Paul Creston to produce the AAA's first commissioned composition, *Prelude and Dance* (Opus 69). Many great composers and accordionist-composers were to follow in the ensuing decades.

I came on the scene in the early 1990s, having moved from the Baltimore area to New Jersey to accept a professorship in music theory and composition at The College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State College). Though I had not been involved with the AAA since my student days competing in its national competitions, I contacted Elsie in the hope of seeing her correspondence with one of her distinguished past commissionees, William Grant Still, for an article I had been invited by another organization to write for a music conference in honor of the late composer's hundredth birthday. She generously complied and soon invited me to join the governing board of the AAA as a member of the Composers' Commissioning Committee. In this capacity, I assisted her in selecting and commissioning composers, wrote articles on past commissioned composers for the annual AAA Festival journal, performed their works at AAA events and other concerts, and authored a manual on how to compose for the accordion (see below for link).

Elsie was the AAA's sole Composers' Commissioning Committee chairperson into the early 2000s, only retiring from it and passing the title to this writer a short time before her passing in 2005. At the time of her retirement, the AAA Governing Board honored her with the title of Composers' Commissioning Committee Chairperson Emeritus. In addition, the annual Elsie Bennett Composition Competition, with both open and junior divisions, was established shortly after her death, and has added many fine works to the classical accordion repertoire. During her half century of dedicated and all-consuming service, Elsie achieved the amazing feat of having commissioned 33 composers who wrote 55 works collectively. They will always stand as a significant and pioneering part of the core of now well over a thousand and still increasing concert compositions for or including accordion worldwide.

Please visit [www.ameraccord.com/aaacommissions.php](http://www.ameraccord.com/aaacommissions.php) to explore the list of all AAA commissioned works, links to recorded performances where possible, articles on the works, and to download a free copy of "Composer's Guide to the Piano Accordion." The AAA Composers' Commissioning Committee welcomes donations from all those who love the classical accordion and wish to see its modern original concert repertoire continue to grow. The American Accordionists' Association is a 501(c)(3) corporation. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent of the law. They can easily be made – including your tax-deductible receipt – by visiting the AAA Store at [www.ameraccord.com/cart.aspx](http://www.ameraccord.com/cart.aspx). Works funded by single donors or identified groups of donors would be dedicated to them, and their names would appear on all published scores as well as in AAA published listings and pertinent articles.

For additional information, please contact Dr. McMahan at [grillmyr@gmail.com](mailto:grillmyr@gmail.com).

## AAA Festival Orchestra to be Conducted by Joan Cochran Sommers

This year's 85th Anniversary AAA Festival Orchestra will be under the direction of renowned conductor Joan Cochran Sommers.

Joan was awarded the title of Professor Emerita upon her retirement from the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory of Music (USA), where she established and taught the accordion degree program for 40 years. She has arranged innumerable works for accordion orchestra over many years, often for the UMKC Accordion Orchestra, a large symphonic accordion orchestra, which, under her direction, competed in and won more first prizes in Virtuoso Accordion Orchestra Competitions than any other American group. This record is still unbroken today. In addition to her work with orchestras, Joan taught numerous accordionists over many decades, many who went on to distinguish themselves as artists, competition winners, and music professionals.



when they presented their 50th Gala Concert at the university. Joan is also the founder of the founder of the CIA World Accordion Orchestra, which has presented concerts and premieres in many countries around the world, with the orchestra often boasting more than 100 members.

Joan C. Sommers has held positions in several music organizations, including the Accordionists & Teachers Guild International (ATG) and the Confédération Internationale des Accordionistes (CIA – IMC-UNESCO). Today, Professor Sommers enjoys performing with fellow accordionists in duo, with other instrumentalists, and with the UMKC Chamber Accordion Ensemble. In addition to her performing, she continues to adjudicate, coach soloists, prepare accordion orchestra arrangements, and conduct accordion orchestras regularly. After her retirement as CIA Vice President, she was

In both 1955 and 1956, she earned the right to represent the USA in the Coupe Mondiale, and those experiences opened her eyes to the tremendous opportunities available to accordionists; perhaps it also fixed her lifelong interest in worldwide accordion activities. In 2011, she celebrated the 50th anniversary of her UMKC Accordion Orchestra

unanimously awarded the status of CIA Honorary Member.

To register to play in the 2023 AAA Festival Orchestra under the direction of Joan C. Sommers, please visit [www.ameracord.com](http://www.ameracord.com), where festival information continues to be posted as it becomes available.

## The Accordion Seminars presented by Dr. William Schimmel

The Accordion Seminars curated by Dr. William Schimmel will celebrate their 29th year in 2023. The event sponsor – the Accordion Global Association (AGA) – welcomes you to the “Ominous Side of the Accordion,” a three-day event that will take place July 28-30, 2023.



Tune into The Seminars this year, with accordion philosopher, Dr. William Schimmel, and the seminar team, who promise some really cool presentations and some wonderful not new pieces. All Premieres, some remakes...they will be great fun and it will all make for some really good discussions. Exploring visual arts, dance, video, music theater, and concept art, the content is presented on the highest level.

Like the last three years, the event will be held virtually, and links will be provided prior to each day. For reservations and additional information, please email [accordionbill@gmail.com](mailto:accordionbill@gmail.com), call (212) 876-0827, or call (917) 498-6823.



## John Torcello Performs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic

Accordionist John Torcello was the featured accordionist in the recent Los Angeles Philharmonic performance of John Adams' powerful opera, *Girls of the Golden West*.

John Adams' opera, *Girls of the Golden West*, is a rejection of the whitewashed romantic view of California in the early days of the Gold Rush. Director Peter Sellars drew from historical texts when he created the libretto, particularly from the memoirs of a woman who called herself Dame Shirley. As Sellars has said, "These true stories of the Forty-Niners are overwhelming in their heroism, passion, and cruelty, telling tales of racial conflicts, colorful and humorous exploits, political strife and struggles to build new life." Responding to these incidents, Adams' propulsive music captures all the conflicting emotions with his characteristic insight. The Los Angeles Times said, "There should be no doubt that *Girls of the Golden West* is the most powerful Opera of the moment."



Beginning to play the accordion at age 7, John Torcello was a student of Al Cirrillo at Roxy's Music Store in Batavia, NY. His subsequent studies were with Joseph Robusto, an early proponent of the chromatic free bass instrument, who subsequently introduced John to the late, great jazz accordionist Russ Messina in Buffalo, NY.

It was under Messina's tutelage that John became the USA's ATG Champion in 1971 and 1972. He traveled to compete in the CIA Coupe Mondiale in Bruges, Belgium, where he earned 3rd Place, and then one year later, went on to win the coveted Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships held in Caracas, Venezuela. John later completed his undergraduate Music Composition degree at the University of Toronto, studying accordion with Joseph Macerollo.

John has enjoyed an accomplished career playing with orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as for other important musical events. Career highlights include appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Pasadena Pops/Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Long Beach Opera, Jacaranda Music and Idyllwild Arts Orchestra under conductors including Michael Tilson Thomas, Simon Rattle, Zubin Mehta, Andreas Mitsek, Rachel Worby, Carl St. Clair, John Williams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Gustavo Dudamel in works by composers including DelTredici, Berg, Weill, Piaf, Golijov, Bernstein, Piazzolla, Shostakovitch, Dean, and Zappa.

Several of John Torcello's recordings have been re-released including: "TORCELLO Music of the Baroque," "TORCELLO State of the Art Accordion," and "Pastiche - John Torcello and Anthony Brazier (Flute)," all of which are available on Amazon.

## New England Digital Accordion Orchestra

Where can a lover of music witness a musical ensemble consisting entirely of accordions, accompanied by two vocalists, a drummer, and guitarist that combines the sounds of nearly every instrument and a song list from nearly every genre on the planet into a single concert? The answer is in a concert performance of the New England Digital Accordion Orchestra, which has its roots in Western Massachusetts.

The orchestra is the first of its kind in the US and one of only two known in existence throughout the world, according to founder and conductor, AAA 2nd Vice President Sam Falcetti. "Close your eyes and you won't imagine that you are listening to a group consisting mostly of accordions," says Sam. The group, which performed recently at Chatham First Night on Cape Cod, uses Roland's digital V-Accordions.

The orchestra's repertoire ranges from Broadway show and Hollywood film tunes to country and rock 'n' roll and from Dixieland to polka classics. Formed in 2015 by Sam Falcetti, whose family founded and still runs the Falcetti Music stores, the orchestra currently features performers representing four of the six New England states. Along with First Night Chatham, the group has performed at the Eastern States Exposition and other regional fairs, as well as appeared as an opening act for Deanna Martin and Bobby Rydell at the Italian Festival in Enfield.



The recent First Night Chatham featured 70 entertainment acts from around the country. Videos of the performances can be viewed on YouTube and Facebook by searching for New England Digital Accordion Orchestra.

To learn more about the orchestra, contact Sam Falcetti at [samfalcetti@gmail.com](mailto:samfalcetti@gmail.com).

## Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA)

The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) has announced several events for the upcoming year.

The Winter Congress and CIA 149th General Assembly of Delegates will be held in Paks, Hungary. The Winter Congress is being hosted by our CIA Voting Member "Az Ifjú Harmonikásokért" Alapítvány - "For the Young Accordionists" Foundation, President Olga Papp, March 3-5.

In addition to the meetings of the CIA Executive and Music Committees as well as the General Assembly, the host CIA member will offer concerts by Marcell Csuka (solo) and with the Mixed Choir of Paks, the Ádám Pataki Quartet as well as a welcome dinner with at the Fritz Winery in the City of Szekszárd.

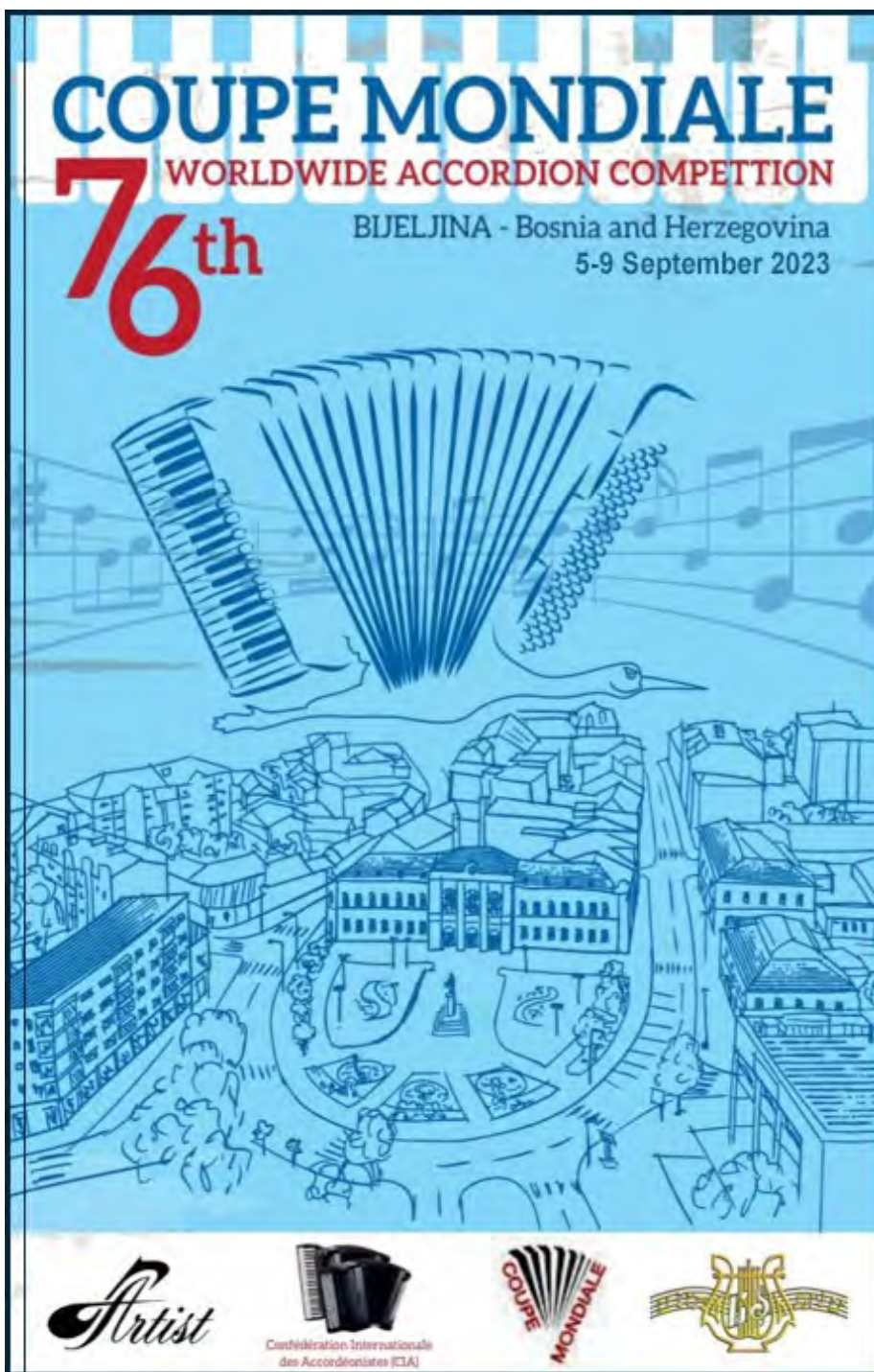
On May 6, the CIA will host its annual World Accordion Day Celebration, promoting the accordion all around the world among its member organizations as well as accordionists of all nations and genres of performance style.

The feature highlight of the CIA Year will be the annual Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships.

The 76th Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) Coupe Mondiale will be held September 5-9, 2023 in Bijeljina, Bosnia & Herzegovina. The event will be hosted by the CIA member, Association of Artists (Bijeljina), Organised by the 2023 CIA Honorary Vice President Slavica Peri.

CIA President Mirco Patarini and CIA Secretary General Kimmo Mattila warmly invite accordion competitors, teachers, and supporters to attend the 2023 Coupe Mondiale, which will feature concerts and competitions as follows:

- 76th Coupe Mondiale
- Masters Coupe Mondiale
- Junior Coupe Mondiale
- Virtuoso Entertainment Music
- Junior Virtuoso Entertainment Music
- Chamber Music - Classical
- Chamber Music - World Music



The 2023 rules and regulations, as well as additional festival information, can be found online by visiting [www.coupemondiale.org](http://www.coupemondiale.org). For more information about the CIA, please visit [www.accordions.com/cia](http://www.accordions.com/cia).



## Hanzhi Wang (Accordion) and Steven Banks (Saxophone) in Concert

Accordionist Hanzhi Wang will be joined by Steven Banks on saxophone for a noontime concert on February 22, 2023 as part of the Young Artist Concert Series. This popular lunchtime series features an array of some of the most exciting young musicians performing today. These concerts will also be livestreamed.

The concert will feature the following program: George Frideric Handel, Recorder Sonata in G minor, HWV 360; Krzysztof Penderecki, Three Miniatures; J.S. Bach, Selections from Goldberg Variations, BWV 988; Martin Lohse, Autumn Rain and Winter's Tale; J.S. Bach, Partita for Flute in A minor, BWV 1013; Miko Baj Majkusiak, The Elements; and Astor Piazzolla, Milonga Del Angel.

Praised for her captivating stage presence and performances that are technically and musically masterful, the groundbreaking young musician Hanzhi Wang is the first accordionist to win a place on the roster of Young Concert Artists in its 58-year history, and her hour-long appearance on the 2,145th episode of New York WQXR's Young Artists Showcase marked the first appearance of a solo accordionist on the program.

First Prize Winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Ms. Wang's debut opened the Young Concert Artists Series in New York in The Peter Marino Concert at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, and her Washington, DC debut opened the 40th Anniversary Young Concert Artists Series at the Kennedy Center, co-presented with Washington Performing Arts.

Ms. Wang won First Prize in the 40th Castelfidardo International Accordion Competition in Italy, has served on the jury for the Accordion Competition of Rome and Portugal's International Accordion Festival, and inspired the next generation of accordionists with lectures, performances, and master classes at the Manhattan School of Music, Royal Danish Academy of Music, Tianjin Music Conservatory, Beijing's Capital Normal University, Tilburg and Ghent Music Conservatories (Belgium), and the inaugural 2018 Nordaccordion Festival in Norway.

Ms. Wang earned her bachelor's degree at the China Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and her master's degree at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen as a student of Geir Draugsvol.

The February 22 concert will take place in the Morgan's Gilder Lehrman Hall, 225 Madison Avenue, New York, NY.



## Hector Del Curto Performs on “Argentina, 1985” Soundtrack

Bandoneon artist Hector Del Curto has performed on the soundtrack for the Oscar-nominated film, “Argentina, 1985.” He shares that he was very happy to have participated in this historic film by playing bandoneon on the score composed by Pedro Osuna. “Argentina, 1985” won a Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film, is nominated for an Academy Award for Best International Film, and has gained much attention for placing a critical period in the history of contemporary Argentina in center stage.

Directed by Santiago Mitre, “Argentina, 1985” depicts the Trial of the Juntas, the prosecution of Jorge Videla's dictatorship that exploited and oppressed the country from 1976 to 1981. The film plays out through the perspective of the case's chief prosecutor Julio César Strassera and his assistant Luis Moreno Ocampo, who worked unremittingly to bring justice to the crimes and human rights violations committed by Videla's regime. While “Argentina, 1985” creates a true-to-life portrait of the Trial of the Juntas, audiences may crave more background understanding of Videla's dictatorship and how it led to more than 30,000 estimated disappearances and deaths of Argentine citizens.

Composer Pedro Osuna is a composer of concert music and film and TV scores. He became the youngest Berklee student to ever write music for an Academy Award-nominated film and later became the youngest person to ever work as orchestrator on a James Bond film. A composer from Spain based in Los Angeles, Pedro Osuna's career has been described as “meteoric.” His recent projects include “Argentina, 1985” (composer) and Simon West's blockbuster “The Legend Hunters” (co-composer), and he has collaborated with some of the most important composers of our time on projects like Marvel's “Thor: Love and Thunder” and Pixar's “Lightyear” (M. Giacchino), “007: No Time To Die” (H. Zimmer), and the Expo 2021 (A. R. Rahman).

After studying with Nadia Boulanger's student Isaiah Jackson and Bernstein's disciple Richard Danielpour, he quickly found his style and started to get

commissioned by some of the most interesting artists and conductors of our time, including collaborations with multi-Grammy-winning Hila Plitmann, Sophia Bacelar, Pablo Sainz Villegas, Francisco Fullana, the JACK, Carpe Diem, Mivos, and Diotima Quartets, and maestro Mauricio Linari.

Héctor del Curto was born in Buenos Aires and began to study tango music at a young age, winning the Best Bandoneon under 25 when only 17 years old. Following that honor, he played with the late tango greats, Astor Piazzolla and Osvaldo Pugliese among many others. During this time, he played at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. In 2018, he won the Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album for the album Jazz Tango as a member of the Pablo Ziegler Trio.

Based in New York, Hector Del Curto's recent engagements include a recorded performance of Piazzolla's bandoneon concerto “Aconcagua” with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Maestro Thomas Wilkins, a performance of Piazzolla's “Four Seasons of Buenos Aires” with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, and a performance with the Portland Symphony Orchestra, which included Del Curto's composition, “Paris to Cannes.”

For further information: [hectordelcurto@gmail.com](mailto:hectordelcurto@gmail.com)



## Centre National et International de Musique et d'Accordéon (CNIMA) Workshops

Renowned accordion teacher Jacques Mornet (France), Director of the Centre National et International de Musique et d'Accordéon (CNIMA), and teacher and co-director Nathalie Boucheix will visit the USA to present two accordion workshops in New Orleans, LA.

Following its successful teaching and concert tour of 2022, CNIMA is thrilled to announce its return to the USA with two workshops to be presented May 22-23, 2023. CNIMA directors Jacques and Nathalie look forward to sharing their revered accordion technique with amateurs and professionals of all ages and styles.



For piano and chromatic button accordion, you can transform your playing with the renowned French Accordion School, which includes all levels, all ages, and all styles from beginner to professional. Enter a learning environment that transports you to a world of beauty and passion. A workshop in which each participant's individual expression is encouraged through a rigorous approach to discovering one's own musicality.

Educators Jacques Mornet and Nathalie Boucheix provide unique and inspiring instruction on accordion. With over 60 years of teaching hundreds of professionals, world champions, and avid amateurs of all ages, the CNIMA legacy has evolved as the destination for accordionists who are committed to improving the heart and soul of their playing.

Jacques Mornet founded the CNIMA with Nathalie Boucheix in 1995. While initially working as a school teacher and playing accordion in an orchestra on the side, he quickly became passionate about teaching the accordion. He became the Thor county music school's director. And while there in Provence, he developed a one-of-a-kind teaching system, putting an emphasis on the fact the accordion is a wind instrument. Throughout the years, his students have been very successful at international competitions in both classical and virtuoso entertainment music, establishing him as a world renowned teacher with his students earning a record of 116 first prizes.

Accordionist Nathalie Boucheix co-founded the CNIMA in 1995 with her former teacher, Jacques Mornet and is now the school's CEO. Winner of some of the renowned international accordion championships - Trophée Mondial (1994) and Klingenthal (1994) - and at French competitions such as The Medard Ferrero Prize (1993), she is also the recipient of the Sacem Francis Baxter prize (1993). She holds a DEM (Diplôme d'Etudes Musicales) in accordion. She teaches accordion and music theory with an emphasis in accordion technique and musical interpretation, both in classical music and virtuoso entertainment genres.

This year, CNIMA-USA is offering two consecutive weeklong workshops in one of the world's great music cities, New Orleans, Louisiana. The format of the workshops is almost identical to the successful workshops CNIMA holds throughout the year at their school in Saint Sauves d'Auvergne, France.

Accordionists attending the New Orleans workshops can expect: Intensive one-on-one instruction with master teachers; Group classes learning the Mornet Method with other attendees; Personalized instruction on music of your choice; Performance preparation; and lunches catered by New Orleans chefs. During the course, the teachers will work with you to unlock your emotional expression, fine tune your ear to listen more musically, share the secrets of bellows phrasing to produce a rich sound, and work with you on creating dynamics and a variety of articulations.

The workshop schedule includes:

- Monday: brief orientation, make the "before" video of the song you'll work on during the week, group class, private classes
- Tuesday thru Friday: Two group & private classes daily
- Friday afternoon: final group class, make the "after" video of your song
- Friday night: recital including all attendees' performances and a performance by Nathalie Boucheix
- Saturday: review before-and-after videos, detailed analysis of strengths and opportunities in your post-workshop practices and performances



For further information on registration and payment, please email CNIMA at [cnimausa@gmail.com](mailto:cnimausa@gmail.com).

## Chicagoland Accordion Academy at A World of Accordions Museum

Director of the Chicagoland Accordion Academy (Chicago) and ATG President Mary Ann Covone recently took a group of enthusiastic members to visit and volunteer at A World of Accordions Museum in Superior, WI.

Hosted by Dr. Helmi Harrington, Curator of the Museum, Dr. Harrington provided several hours of practical accordion repair instruction along with an in-depth guided tour of the museum and lecture on the history of the accordion. The museum has more than 2,000 instruments on display spanning the almost 200-year history of the accordion. After learning some important lessons about basic accordion repair, the group members were given some practical experience by starting to work on cleaning and repairing a few of the Museum instruments.

In addition, the group was able to assist with filing and sorting new collections of music donated to the museum by the Castiglione Estate. Housing more than a million sheets of music, Helmi said it was extremely helpful to have the many boxes of donated music divided into various categories and filed.

Daiva Kiselius is pictured cleaning a metal grille from a 100-year-old instrument, while Mayra Martinez works on cleaning up the keys.

A World of Accordions Museum offers regular seminars in accordion repair and restoration, as well as hosts numerous concert and workshop events throughout the year. For more information about upcoming activities, please visit [www.worldofaccordions.org](http://www.worldofaccordions.org).



## Mario Tacca and Mary Mancini in Concert



Accordionist and vocalist team Mario Tacca and Mary Mancini will present an evening of “Music from the Heart” at Rini's Restaurant and Wine Bar in Elmsford, NY on March 31, 2023.

Internationally acclaimed vocal artist Mary Mancini has been featured in the New York Times, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, and the Journal News and has performed in a variety of venues around the world. Able to sing in eight different languages, Mary draws from a deep repertory reservoir. She is adept at pop, show tunes, operatic arias, and sacred music and has received worldwide acclaim.

Accordionist and AAA Board of Director Mario Tacca is a multiple international and national competition winner, winning the World Cup of Italy, the Grand Prix of Paris, the US National Competition, and the International Accordion competition held at Carnegie Hall in

New York City. Mario Tacca dazzles audiences across the US and around the world with his outstanding virtuosity and his exciting interpretations of international music, the classics, and pop.

As a duo, the husband-and-wife team have performed together for over 40 years, sometimes clocking up as many as 200 concerts. Dynamic entertainers, they engage audiences with musical genres that span classical, pop, gospel as well as traditional music from Italy and France.

Rini's Restaurant is located at 12 West Main Street in Elmsford, the performance will be 7:00-10:00 PM, and reservations are strongly recommended by calling (914) 592-6799. For further information on additional upcoming performances, please email [manciniandtacca@gmail.com](mailto:manciniandtacca@gmail.com).