



MASSACHUSETTS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION

Volume 7, Issue 6
August 2013

The MAAA is a group of accordion enthusiasts that includes players of all skill levels and accordion types, as well as interested non-players.

Join us!

4th Sunday of every month

1:30-4:00 p.m.

Ciociaro Social Club

144 Bridge Street

Newton, Massachusetts

Next meeting

August 25, 2013

Play-Along and open mike

Mark your calendar

September 22, 2013

October 27, 2013

November 17, 2013

December 15, 2013

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www.MAAccordion.org



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JULY MEETING HIGHLIGHT

MAAA members enjoyed a special workshop by [“Coach Dave” Laprise](#), who explored the influence of blues on hillbilly, rockabilly, and ‘50s rock-and-roll music at the July 29, 2013 meeting.

With the participation of other members, Coach Dave played examples of 8-bar, 12-bar, and other blues formats, then everyone joined in to play “Coach Dave’s Boogie.”

“It was interesting to see how Coach Dave took us from a simple four-bar chord progression through the history of rock-and-roll,” noted Kim Galle after the meeting.

MAAA Board elections and bylaw changes

The Massachusetts Accordion Association is a volunteer-run nonprofit organization. Nominations of candidates for Board positions will be made at the September meeting.

Board elections will take place at the Annual Meeting in October. Proposed bylaw changes will also be voted on at that meeting.

Details are available in the July issue of the MAAA newsletter, available online: www.MAAccordion.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Catherine Coleman

Hello! I'm happy to be editing the MAAA newsletter and glad I can give back to this great organization. I hope you will help me keep the newsletter interesting and relevant.

Please let me know what you would like to see and read about in its pages (my contact info is below).

I studied classical piano from an early age and have written songs and played keyboard in different styles over the decades—folk, blues, punk, and cabaret. I last performed publicly as Cabaret Enchanté with singer Shepley Metcalf, performing bilingual arrangements of French chansons and my originals.

I came to the accordion late, wanting to incorporate the musette sound into Cabaret Enchanté's arrangements. Roberto Cassan helped me transition from piano to squeezebox and I spent some time living in a Pays Basque village to study with Jean-Christian Irigoyen, son of the renowned Basque accordionist Beñat Galtxetaburu.

Fast forward to today—a full-time communication job at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and teaching position at Tufts Medical
continued at right



The philosophy of Play-Alongs

Dan Mackowiak

From arranging the music to herding an ever-changing cohort of accordionists, Dan Mackowiak organizes the MAAA Play-Alongs. Here he shares the philosophy behind the Play-Along program.

The MAAA Play-Along has evolved over its four-year history, but its primary objective has always been to encourage participation by as many players as possible, regardless of skill level.

Play-Alongs also provide players the opportunity to share ideas on musicianship, experience the interplay among musicians in a “band,” and contribute to the sound created by multiple accordions.

The only player guideline for the Play-Along is that the music should be played as written. Beyond that, the format is flexible. Players can pick and choose between levels and parts to best fit their individual preferences. Liberal expectations allow for virtually any degree of preparation. Participants can sit out entire tunes or sections of tunes with which they are not comfortable.



Dan Mackowiak

One of the biggest challenges of organizing the Play-Along program, in light of the wide range of experience and skill among the participants, is keeping it interesting. Choosing the music and customizing the arrangements are key factors. Song choices are based on four criteria:

- **Melody:** It should sound good as an instrumental piece
- **Compatibility:** The song should fit the tone and dynamic qualities of acoustic accordions.
- **Novelty:** Unusual or uncommon tunes, including ethnic selections,

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Editor's Note / continued

School don't allow me much time to maintain even amateur status. That's why I'm so delighted to have discovered MAAA, where I can listen and learn with others who love the accordion.

PLEASE share your news and ideas for the newsletter. My email is catherine.coleman@gmail.com. I will be delighted to hear from you!

Philosophy of Play-Alongs / continued

keep Play-Alongs interesting for players and listeners.

- **Variety:** A Play-Along should include tunes with different styles, rhythms, and tempos.

All of the arrangements developed for MAAA Play-Alongs are tailored to fit the Play-Along model. Tunes are of easy-to-intermediate difficulty. Easy tunes are sometimes embellished with key changes and a variation chorus to reduce repetitiveness. Medleys of two or three shorter tunes are occasionally created.

Play-along music is arranged for two broad skill levels. Level One is intended to be playable by most players. It is often simplified or otherwise modified, but still musically fulfilling. Left-hand accompaniment is optional. Level Two is for more experienced players.

The Play-Along will not satisfy every player preference. For example, it is not designed to teach specific playing skills; its results will not be performance quality; and the repertoire has limitations. On the other hand, the Play-Along gives every participant an opportunity to play in a casual band setting, and to contribute to a collective music-making effort.

The MAAA Play-Along repertoire to date includes more than 180 songs. We hope that understanding the philosophy behind the Play-Along will encourage you to join us!



Origin of “accordion orchestras”

One accordion can sound like a whole band, so the sound of many accordions playing together is powerful, beautiful, and unique. Audiences and musicians have enjoyed creating and listening to this sound for decades, from Hohner’s early accordion orchestras to today’s Play-Alongs.

“As the accordion became more accessible, there was an effort by manufacturers to change the social reception of the instrument from ‘folk’ instrument to a more ‘respectable’ one. In the 1920s, Hohner, one of the main German accordion manufacturers, recognized another marketing opportunity, and began publishing classical sheet music.... It also established a college for accordion teachers, and created an accordion orchestra that toured Germany and nearby countries, presenting the instrument in a new light. Women were a big part of this original Hohner accordion orchestra, and consequently there were many other accordion orchestras for women.”

www.squeezeboxstories.com



Hohner accordion orchestra



Now you can join MAAA on Facebook

MAAA's colorful banner at the Somerville Squeezebox Slam on June 15 seemed to astonish passers-by as much as the accordionist making a marionette dance with her feet and the "free food" wagon that handed out watermelon rescued from local dumpsters.

"There's actually an association?" "Why haven't I ever heard of you?" and "I've got an old accordion in the attic, where can I get it fixed?" people asked repeatedly. They signed up for MAAA's email list and wondered if the MAAA was on Facebook.

I approached the Board, found out that a page existed, and volunteered to help increase its visibility. After discussion and establishment of some guiding principles, they agreed.

Benefits of social media

A Facebook presence can help us increase awareness of and participation in MAAA and its events. It also can provide us with a hub for sharing accordion-related news and promoting local performances.

So if you're on Facebook, please:

- "Like" the page and "share" posts to help spread the word.
- Post info about upcoming performances, new discoveries, and events.

MAAA Facebook guidelines

- Posts must be relevant and respectful.
- Defamatory or irrelevant posts will be deleted and the poster banned.
- Postings must not violate copyright law.
- Information about internal MAAA policy may not be posted unless it has been approved by the Board.

www.facebook.com/MAAccordion

MAAA LEADERSHIP

See page 1 for info about upcoming Board elections.

President

Bob Guenther

Vice-President

Jim Avedisian
vze2v42i@verizon.net

Treasurer\Secretary

Patty Simmons
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Board Members

Lewis Howes
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Ed Wawrzynowicz
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Al Bacchiocchi
rmbuck@comcast.net

Penny Yunuba
PYunuba@comcast.net

Board Advisor

Tony Marini

Calendar

Aug. 14-18, 2013

**American Accordionists
Association Festival
New York City, NY**

www.ameraccord.com/festival
Competitions, exhibits, concerts,
celebrations.

September 27-29, 2013

**New England Squeeze In
Becket, MA**

www.squeeze-in.org

*Non-profit laid-back gathering of
players and friends. Beginners and
players of all levels welcome.*

**Email upcoming gigs, performances by favorite accordionists,
and other events to: catherine.coleman@gmail.com**