



MASSACHUSETTS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION

Volume 7, Issue 9
November 2013

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

Join us! Open to the public!
4th Sunday of every month
1:30-4:00 p.m.
Ciociaro Social Club
144 Bridge Street
Newton, Massachusetts

Next meeting
November 17, 2013

Mark your calendar
December 15, 2013

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Please email your news and items of interest to Catherine Coleman, newsletter editor:
catherine.coleman@gmail.com

MIDI: “Even the chairs will dance”



Italo DeMasi presenting on “The Power of Midi” at MAAA’s November 2013 meeting. (Photo: Carol Avedisian)

October’s MAAA meeting featured a special presentation by Italo DeMasi titled “The power of the MIDI.” Using his own MIDI system and sound module, he demonstrated its power.

“I can program the most played rhythms--up to 24 of them--on the white keys without going to the sound module. Everything is set up--the speed and the rhythm. The sound module does all the work for you. There are many different accordion sounds available. And the Latin rhythms--even the chairs will dance!”

Patty Simmons concurred, saying afterwards, “It was hard to stay in my seat during Italo’s session because I wanted to get up and dance!”

Occasionally reaching out to touch the sound module, Italo played songs ranging from “Over the Rainbow” to a Puccini aria, demonstrating how the MIDI allows him to be a “one-man orchestra.”

“What a fun instrument!” Lillian Monte exclaimed during the brief pause between a cha-cha and a
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Stevie Wonder tune.

The presentation was interesting both to MIDI aficionados and to those who knew little about it. "I admire and enjoy listening to folks who create music using modern technology," Patty commented. "I enjoyed Italo's presentation because of the music he created for us! He artistically wove the melodies and improvisation into an intricate electronic blend that he had designed with his Midi system. You have to have a very good sense of rhythm and melodic flow to do that sort of playing and you have to understand how the technology can work for you."



Louis Howe (above) masterfully delivered the Trieste Overture while Carmen D'Angelo (below) took us from Funiculee Funicula to high opera.



Open Mike October 2013

The October 27 Open Mike opened up with Patty Simmons playing "12th Street Rag" on her new birthday Borsini accordion. (Congratulations on your birthday and your beautiful new accordion, Patty!) She provided a bit of background on the history of rags, and, coincidentally, a little later Kim Galle performed "The Entertainer," one of Scott Joplin's most well-known rags.

More history followed, with Coach Dave sharing the story of "Blue Moon," a well-known classic that survived Hollywood's cutting room



Above, Patty Simmons plays Twelfth Street Rag on her new birthday Borsini accordion. Dave Magliozzi (below) played El Choclo (it means corn cob).



floor several times before Lorenz Hart came up with the set of lyrics that went on to be featured in numerous films and recorded by everyone from Billie Holiday to Rod Stewart.

[A video of excerpts from the October 27 meeting can be viewed online.](#)

Thank you to Carol Avedisian for providing the meeting video and for capturing these highlights of the Open Mike.



David Rukhelman's accordion (above) sounded like a duet between a harpsichord and a cuckoo bird. Below, Bill LaPolla traveled all the way from Cape Cod to play.



MAAA Annual Meeting

The October 27 meeting of the Massachusetts Accordion Association included several important annual business activities, including the election of a new Board of Directors, approval of bylaw changes, and a treasurer’s report.

New Board

The MAAA Board of Directors meets bi-monthly and as needed to oversee the Association’s legal and musical responsibilities. Congratulations to the new MAAA Board of Directors, and thank you for your commitment and significant contributions to our musical community.

The new Officers of the MAAA Board are:

Tony Marini, President
 Jim Avedisian, Vice-President
 Patty Simmons, Treasurer and clerk

Elected board members are:

Al Bacchiocchi
 Jan Borelli
 Carmen D’Angelo
 Lewis Howes
 Gary Morin
 Ed Wawrzynowicz

Treasurer’s report

Patty Simmons presented the treasurer’s report, copies of which are available upon request.

She noted that there are currently 57 members--35 individual and 11 dual membership. Five new members joined MAAA in the past year.

Bylaw changes

The following bylaw changes were approved:

Article IV, Section 3 was changed to read, “Directors and Officers serve for two-year terms” in order to allow continuity of governance (previously it stated that they may be re-elected for one consecutive two-year term).

Article IV, Section 5, which previously stated that a Director or Officer may be removed from office with or without cause, was revised so that “or without” was removed, as the Board felt that it is unfair to remove someone from office without cause.

Raising a cup of thanks to Carol

When we walk into an MAAA meeting, two powerful, pleasurable sensations greet us right away: the sound of many accordions being played and the smell of fresh coffee.

We can see who’s warming up their instruments, but we may not be as aware of the person to whom we should give thanks for the hot coffee and bottled spring water that are always available to us during our meetings.

For the past two years, Carol Avedisian has ensured that attendees at MAAA meetings have plenty of hot and cold drinks each month.



Thank you, Carol Avedisian!!!

Thank you Carol, for all you do to support the Association.



This also includes recording meeting activities with videos and photographs. THANKS!!!

Volunteer needed

MAAA seeks a new volunteer to provide beverages at monthly meetings. Please contact one of the MAAA Board members if you are willing to help.

If you would like to raise your own MAAA cup, visit our [website](#) where you will also find clothing, carriers, and many other items with the MAAA logo.

Paul Monte performing at MAAA meeting on 11/17

MAAA members will have a special opportunity to hear the accordion played by a true master when [Paul Monte](#), one of New England's leading accordion professionals, performs with bassist [Tal Shalom-Kobi](#) at the MAAA meeting on November 17.

Paul's passion for music spans many decades. By the time he was 14, he knew he wanted to master the accordion and was relentless in perfecting the discipline of his instrument. Formal training in music and creative improvisational technique informed Paul's style, which is known for its European harmonics and rhythms.

Paul held multi-year engagements with two of Boston's most prestigious hotels—the Statler and the Copley Plaza—where he performed with their house bands. During the summers he provided music for the Nantucket Yacht Club.

Paul's accordion performances created a demand for his instruction from aspiring musicians. In 1952 he founded his first studio in Copley Square, Boston. His teaching practice thrived, and he opened additional studios where he offered guitar, piano, and drum lessons as well. He continues to teach and operates the [Paul Monte Music Studio](#) in Wellesley Hills, MA, just outside of Boston.

Looking around the room at a recent MAAA meeting, he observed that, "Many of the



Paul Monte and Tal Shalom-Kobi people here are or have been my students!" Paul encourages beginners to perform for others in order to develop their skills and confidence.

In 1963, Paul became the first instructor to teach the accordion in the Popular Music Department at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He is one of the founders of the Accordion Teachers Association of Massachusetts (ATAM), for which he has served as President, Treasurer, and as member of the Board of Directors.

One of the highlights of his career was when he accompanied Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter, Melissa Manchester and the Boston Pops

Orchestra in "La Vie en Rose" at Boston Symphony Hall.

In 2010, Paul recorded a CD with [Tal Shalom-Kobi](#), a bass player who became one of his accordion students. The CD, which will be available for sale at the meeting, features a variety of styles and selections that have marked Paul's illustrious career.

A native of Israel, Tal has been a bass player and music educator for more than 20 years. She holds a degree in Music Education from Berklee College of Music, and a Masters in Jazz Performance from New England Conservatory. She has performed in Jazz Festivals overseas and locally in venues like Berklee Performance Center, Ryles Jazz Club, and Jordan Hall.

Oktoberfest with NHAA

by Jim Avedisian

The Oktoberfest meeting of the [New Hampshire Accordion Association](#) took place October 19 at the [Accordion Connection](#) on Route 106 in Gilmanton, NH, a beautiful piece of countryside. The MAAA was represented by me and my wife, Carol, and Patty and Jeff Simmons.

Donna Maria Regis, who, along with Sue Welch, runs the meetings, started by looking for a volunteer to start the Open Mic portion. Patty volunteered and played the “12th Street Rag,” doing a fine job and helping to break the ice by volunteering first.

I volunteered next and played “Here’s That Rainy Day.” There were numerous other Open Mic players, all doing a really good job. Just as in the MAAA, every performance was applauded in a truly non-threatening environment which encourages participation.



Interstate ensemble at the NHAA Oktoberfest meeting

Next came refreshments and socialization. When I went to put my accordion back in the gig bag before refreshments, I got a big surprise: a huge, mean-looking brown spider in there who evidently thought it would make a good home. After that, I kept the gig bag zipped up when the accordion was not in it!

After refreshments, everyone who wanted to participate played in the play-along session. The first songs were taken from one of the October MAAA play-alongs, consisting of Hof Brau Haus Waltz, Anneliese Polka, and Wien Bleibt March, followed by a waltz medley and a polka medley, and ending with Lili Marlene.

We then turned to the NHAA play-along music, a variety of songs arranged for 1st and 2nd accordion and bass accordion. The final piece was Repasz Band, an arrangement for 6 accordions.

It was a very interesting and enjoyable time for all.

Squeezing out a big win in Boston



Accordionist Tim Brennan of the Dropkick Murphy’s accompanied four of his bandmates in performing the Star Spangled Banner before Game 6 of the World Series on October 30 at Fenway Park. USA Today observed, “It was so Boston it hurt.” After the national anthem, they launched into another Fenway standard, “Shipping Up to Boston.” The Red Sox then beat the St. Louis Cardinals and won the 2013 World Series. Strange but true: The Sox have won every game since 2004 at which the Dropkick Murphys have played!

Accordionist Tim Brennan joined the Dropkicks in 2003, playing accordion, mandolin, and guitar. He struggled for years to hear his instrument over the band’s guitars and drums, then discovered the FR-3 V-Accordion which offered a digital sound source that gives him perfect accordion sound at volumes that can compete with his band mates.

[Listen to the Dropkick Murphys at Fenway.](#)

New England Squeeze-In 2013

The annual New England Squeeze-In was held from September 27-29 in the western Massachusetts town of Becket, which is located in the Berkshire Hills. Each year, free reed players from eastern US and Canada gather for a weekend of playing, dancing, sharing, learning, and enjoying music and each other.

“On Friday night, we met up in the Library and played tunes with several others,” reports Dave Magliozzi, who has attended for the past two years. “Saturday was a full day of workshops ranging from old French and Scottish music to beginner Melodeon playing, to a Latin workshop, to Morris and English dance tunes.”

NESI takes place at the Chimney Corners, a beautiful and comfortable year-round camp and conference center about a two-hour drive from Boston.

Dave and MAAA member James Gerke performed at a Saturday night concert, which was followed by line dancing until the wee hours of the morning.

“NESI was eye and ear opening,” he concludes. “Throughout the weekend, I was exposed to new music and wonderful people who play and dance to it. It’s open to the public and is a warm, welcoming experience for all skill levels. I highly recommend it!”



New England Squeeze-In 2014 is tentatively scheduled for September 12-14. Mark your calendars! Find more updates and info at: <http://www.squeeze-in.org/>

Dave Magliozzi at NESI 2013



James Gerke



The Ladies Accordion Orchestra: A musical tradition

The musical tradition of women’s accordion orchestras began in the 1920s when Hoehner, one of the main manufacturers of the instrument, began publishing transcriptions of classical sheet music and formed an accordion orchestra that toured and gave performances. Many members of the original Hoehner accordion ochestras were female, and other accordion orchestras for women soon began forming.

MAAA members are helping to keep the tradition alive--they comprised half of a Ladies Accordion Orchestra that performed in September’s annual HONK! parade along with dozens of other bands from across the country and around the world.

The group was organized by Sari Kalin, who leads [Porch-i-oke](#), a “groovy live-music sing-along where the front porch meets the karaoke lounge.” You may have sung along with Porch-i-oke at the 2013 Somerville Squeezebox Slam. [Lady Kielbasa](#), the self-described “Accordion Playing, Lunch Lady Drag Queen” who was the MC of the Squeezebox Slam also performed with the Ladies Accordion Orchestra.



Five of the ten accordionists of the Ladies Accordion Orchestra are MAAA members. Can you spot Penny Yunuba, Catherine Coleman, Betty Widerski, Jooyeon Koo, and Ollie Luey beneath their festive hats? A unicyclist and two percussionists also paraded with the LAO.

Sari provided sheet music and encouragement during two hastily arranged rehearsals, one of which took place on the steps of the Somerville Public Library until the falling rain threatened the wellbeing of everyone’s instruments. Parade day was a sunny Sunday, however, and thousands of people gathered along the route from Davis Square in Somerville to Harvard Square in Cambridge.

MAAA member Penny Yunuba played a Hoehner Piccolette. Betty Widerski played a Moreschi 12-bass. This newsletter’s editor surprised

herself by making it to the finish line with her regulation size squeezebox, but sitting down at the finish line felt sublime. Jooyeon Koo and Ollie Luey, the younger generation of players, never missed a beat or stopped smiling.

The parading bands were mostly brass and percussion--thus it was hard for the Ladies as well as bystanders to hear all-accordion reditions of “Bella Ciao,” “I Walk the Line,” and a medly of nursery rhymes. Nevertheless, the reaction of the crowd to the simple sight of so many accordions ranged from delight to ecstasy.

During pauses, people asked questions and expressed their love of the instrument (and also our hats!). We referred them to the MAAA website for information about instructors and repair services. They sang along. One woman put her hands over her heart and her eyes filled with tears.

The response took me by surprise. Within our accordion community, we share a love for this instrument and joy in its sound. Witnessing the pleasure of so many strangers as the Ladies Accordion Orchestra passed by was testimony to the universality of its appeal and its magic.

The orchestra is tentatively scheduled to perform again at a holiday solstice concert at Arts at the Armory in Somerville on December 21, 2013.

Gigs and shows

The Serfs

Saturday, November 16, 9 pm
The Press Room, Portsmouth, NH
www.garysred.com

The Serfs, featuring NH accordionist and radio personality Gary Sredzienski, combine traditional world music and '50s/'60s style instrumental rock with the goal of "elevating the much maligned image of the piano accordion to that of a diverse multicultural vocalist."

The Mahones

Thursday, November 21, 8 pm
Church, 69 Kilmarnock St., Boston
www.ticketfly.com/venue/803-church/

Pioneers of the Irish punk genre, with Katie "Kaboom!" McConnell (accordion, vocals)

Gumbo Diablo

Saturday, November 23, 8 pm
Main Streets Market and Cafe, Concord, MA
www.mainstreetsmarketandcafe.com

Zydeco and r&b from Louisiana, cumbia from Colombia, forro from Brazil, and modern roots-influenced rock are fused by this Boston-based quartet that features vocals, accordions, keyboards, bass, drums, and percussion.

Bird Mancini

Saturday, November 23, 9 pm
In a Pig's Eye, 148 Derby St., Salem, MA
www.inapigseye.com

Boston's accordion/guitar rock

duo has released a new Latin-flavored CD loosely based on bossa nova circa Brasil '66 and Astrud Gilberto.

Viriditas Women sing Hildegard & Van Ness

Sunday, November 24, 7 pm
First Church in Cambridge
<http://www.nightsong.org>

The women's schola Viriditas sings works by Hildegard von Bingen and local composer Patricia Van Ness, plus contemporary chant by Night Song founder/director Daryl Bichel. Zoe Christiansen, clarinet & accordion, improvises on chant melodies.

Nowell Sing We Clear

Saturday, November 30, 8 pm
First Parish Church of Watertown, Watertown, MA
www.fssgb.org

Nowell Sing We Clear celebrates Christmas as it was known for centuries in Britain and North America and as it continues in many places to the present. While much of the singing is done in unaccompanied style, the pageant integrates the energetic dance band sound of fiddle, button accordion, electric piano, drums, and concertina.

Nutopians

Saturday, December 7, 8 pm
Shalin Liu Performance Center, 37 Main Street, Rockport
www.rcmf.org

An award-winning ensemble celebrates the songs of John Lennon on the 32nd anniversary

of his death with arrangements that weave together guitars, strings, accordion and other keyboards, and light percussion.

Swedish Yuletide

Saturday, December 7
10 am-4 pm
Cyclorama/Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street
swedishyuletide@sweaboston.org

The SWEA Fair and Holiday Celebration, featuring accordionist Nils Lundin with Peter Widmark and Warren Johnson.

Newpoli

Sunday, December 8, 7:30 pm
YMCA Theatre, Cambridge
www.brownpapertickets.com

Musica di Natale--A traditional Italian Christmas

Keep up-to-date with the Massachusetts Accordion Association by visiting our [website](http://www.maaccordion.org) for the latest news, updates about meetings, and links to useful resources like teachers and repair experts.
www.maaccordion.org

Follow MAAA on Facebook to get and share tips about musical happenings in the area and news about the national and international accordion community.
www.facebook.com/MAAccordion