



MASSACHUSETTS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION

Volume 7, Issue 10
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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
December 15, 2013

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

Volunteer needed

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

Paul Monte performs at MAAA



How outstanding was this performance? From standing room only to standing ovations, it will stand out in our memories for quite some time!

Paul Monte, a master of the accordion, and Tal Shalom-Kobi, bass, packed the Ciociaro Social Club on November 17. After leading everyone in a "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" singalong, they performed a varied, challenging program that encompassed many genres. The crowd of friends, family, students, and accordion aficionados was swept away.

"Paul creates a very full sound, and his fingers move so quickly!" Bob Johnson, a musician who

teaches drums in Paul's music studio, noted afterwards. "Plus he has a natural sense of humor, as we saw today."

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MAAA President's plaque presented

Linda Guenther accepted the MAAA's Outgoing President's Plaque on behalf of her husband, Bob, at the November meeting. Bob served as the Association's president from 2011 until his death in April 2013.

"Shortly after we launched our website in 2006, I got a phone call from someone who found us online. We ended up talking for hours about accordions and life. That's how I met Bob Guenther," said Tony Marini, who presented the award to Linda. "He touched all of us."

The plaque tradition was started by Bob himself at the conclusion of the term of the previous president, Dan Mackowiak.

Lewis Howes, MAAA board member, later recalled, "The first person I remember meeting at MAAA was Bob Guenther, who had a very positive view on things. He accepted everybody for who they were. This became the philosophy of the MAAA."



Tony Marini, MAAA President, and Linda Guenther, who accepted the Outgoing President's Plaque on behalf of her husband, Bob.

Monte at MAAA

Tal describes performing with Paul as "a very enriching experience. I enjoy his tune selections and his arranging skills—the way he makes the tunes his own by changing the harmonies, replacing chords with better ones, inserting interludes, and writing his own codas and variations. Though Paul doesn't call himself a jazz player, he is comfortable with jazzing things up. The *Minute Waltz* that we performed is a good example—he turned it into quite a jazzy tune! Also, as you can hear he's comfortable incorporating

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improvised solo—as a jazz musician, that's what I do, and he uses it to enrich our duets."

Among the concert's standout pieces were *Flambee Montalbanaise*, *Por Una Cabeza*, two pieces by Richard Galliano (including *Waltz Margaux*, which Paul identified as his favorite!), and *Tesoro Mio*, which he dedicated to his wife, Lillian.

View videos of the performance on the [MAAA website](#). Thank you to Carol and Jim Avedisian for producing and posting them.

PAUL MONTE: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Professional musician, accordion student



Tal Shalom-Kobi, who performed with Paul Monte at MAAA's November meeting, attended

Berklee College of Music with a scholarship in piano. Shortly after arriving, however, she changed course and switched to bass, which she had never played. "I started from scratch!" she recalls.

She changed course again a few years ago when she decided to learn the accordion, influenced by the music of Richard Galliano. "I know what it means to take on a new instrument as an adult rather than as a child, so it's not a foreign concept to me. It's fun—I just do what I can."

Learning from a master

Tal has been studying accordion with Paul Monte for nearly 3 years. A [music educator](#) herself (she teaches individuals, groups, and school ensembles), Tal values Paul's skills as a teacher.

"Great musicians and performers are not necessarily great teachers, but Paul is wonderful. He explains things clearly, knows how to build a student's confidence, and picks a repertoire that caters to the ability of the student. He's also very inspiring. Playing comes from the heart, and Paul's enthusiasm inspires his students. It's a winning combination."

Tal plays with several bands, including the [Jazz Marauders](#) and [Cruzamente](#), which performs world music. "The accordion has been very handy there!" she notes.

Roland 8x gets a rave review



When Jim Avedisian responded to a question about his new Roland 8x from Dave Magliozzi, the resulting email was so comprehensive and enthusiastic that Dave felt it would be of interest to other members. With Jim's generous permission, it's reprinted here.

Effects: The 8x has 84 effects, so now I can do modulation on guitar sounds, for instance. I can pan left and right, apply compression, and do a lot of other things I couldn't with the 7x. Some of the effects I find really cool, like flangers and phasers, slicers, step delays, etc.

Voices: It has 180 orchestral voices and two orchestral sections, allowing for 56 different treble orchestral available voices at one time, as opposed to 28 on the 7x. Both the 8x and 7x are limited to 7 orchestral bass sounds and 7 orchestral chord sounds in a given set. That hasn't

changed. But by using User Programs on the 8x, I can get the equivalent of 14 different ones versus 7 before.

User Programs: I love the ability to use User Programs. For a particular sound, I can set up everything the way I want it and save as a user program with the actual song name.

Then I just dial it up and I'm ready to go without searching for a particular set. With 1400 user program slots, I won't ever run out! And I still have 37 pre-programmed sets and 63 available empty sets if I want to create sets of my own. You can create a "User Program List" of user programs you want to use for a particular job. For instance, if I know ahead of time what I will be playing, I can create a user program customized for a particular song (like when I did "Here's That Rainy Day") and just run down the list in order.

Layering: The 8x panel is different. Buttons on the panel allow for instant access to accordion, orchestral, and organ sounds. I can instantly layer two different sounds on the fly, then unlayer them (on the 7x, once they are layered it can only be undone by accessing a menu). You might have noticed that on the second

song I played, I layered piano and strings for part of the song. I can actually layer three different sounds on treble, and for the first time I can layer orchestral and accordion sounds on the bass keyboard.

Chin switches: The addition of the three chin switches is a lot of fun. I can use them to apply modulation only when I want it, for example. They can be used to turn drum sounds on and off, move from set to set or user program to user program, turn effects on and off, start and stop recording, start and stop the looper, etc.

Drums: Drums are now available on all three orchestral parts, for the first time on the treble keyboard. One can do some interesting drum solos on it! 7X had one drum set, the 8x has eighteen. The keyboard is now able to have a zone parameter, so it can be set for up to 3 zones, so one part could be accordion, one organ, one orchestral like sax or guitar. I am just starting to experiment with it.

Dynamic bellows control: The bellows has a feature they call dynamic bellows control. You can set the bellows resistance from a menu and have it act more like acoustic bellows, that is, the more keys pressed at a time, the less resistance in the bellows as in an acoustic, with more reeds passing air. It's interesting, but *continued on page 4...*

having played the 7x it takes a little getting used to. You have the option to turn it off via menu.

Looper: The Looper is a blast. I have never used one and am experimenting. You can record a phrase up to one minute, and overdub it. It takes pretty accurate timing!

Jim Avedisian is Vice president of MAAA and has been a member since July 2010. "I was impressed by the fact that ALL levels of skill were accepted and nobody was ever denied nice applause. It was great finding a group of other accordion players," he recalls.

Jim took his first accordion lessons in the fifth grade, lost interest after a year, then picked up the accordion again in high school when he formed a band with friends. Later, as a teacher in the early 1970s, he and his school's music teacher formed a duo (accordion and trombone), which grew over the years to add drums, guitar, and occasional saxophone.

After another pause in playing, the advent of the Roland Digital V accordions called him back "because of the versatility of its sounds, allowing me to achieve a more contemporary sound with my music." He currently performs with harmonica player Chet Williamson at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and occasional restaurant and holiday gigs. Jim is a retired middle-and high-school teacher (computer science, for 33 years) and his other interests include video games and target shooting.

PAUL MONTE: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Paul's pearls

by Lewis Howes

Paul Monte is a world renowned accordionist and teacher. I started studying with Paul in July 2012. Paul has a holistic method of teaching. He cultivates development of technique, theory, reading music (both G-clef and bass clef), scales, chords, accents and notations, timing and tempo, and practice methods. Paul is constantly evaluating a player's technique and is able to make adjustments in one's approach.

Paul believes in teaching classical pieces which contain difficult techniques, and uses many exercises and drills. He also encourages performing difficult music in front of people such as at the MAAA open mic. Paul can teach one to play difficult numbers such as the *Pioneer Concerto* by Eugene Ettore, or *Accordiana* by Charles Magnetti, and also play the music and demonstrate.

Here are some pearls of wisdom Paul shares with students:

"Treat each note like a pearl" is a philosophy of Paul's which has helped me in learning music.

"Playing accordion is like playing two different instruments at once--the right hand and the left hand. Practice each hand separately before playing together" is another philosophy of Paul's. This has helped me in gaining practice efficiency.

"That phrase needs to be cleaned up" is something I frequently hear. This means practice over and over, repeatedly. Play slow at first then increase speed.



Lewis Howes is a member of the MAAA Board of Directors and has been a member since September 2009.

Lewis studied accordion for five years at Arlington Academy of Music, where he participated in an all-accordion orchestra. After graduating from college, he played very little accordion until another teacher at Norfolk County Agricultural High School, where he taught science (he is now retired) organized a music group of students and teachers. They performed in coffeehouses and on WERS, and recorded CDs.

Lewis has composed about 20 songs, many of them for children.

Lewis's other interest include his Cummington MA property, serving as a church steward, and sports.

Playing now in a theater near you

Accordions help tell the story in two new movies

Nebraska

This black and white film follows a road trip taken by an unbalanced and aging Missouri father who's convinced he's won a million dollar magazine sweepstakes and his son, who agrees to drive him to Nebraska to claim his winnings in an attempt to get to know him better. It's directed by Alexander Payne (*The Descendants*, *Sideways*, *Election*) and stars Bruce Dern, Will Forte, June Squibb, and Stacy Keach.

The movie's music was composed by Mark Orton, a member of Tin Hat, and prominently features the accordion, played by [Rob](#)

[Burger](#) (who is also featured on Linda Thompson's gorgeous new album, *Won't be Long Now*). In an [interview](#) in Film Music Magazine, Orton explained, "Alexander [Payne, the director] is a musician himself, and is very much involved with the score and its role in the film. For *Nebraska* his idea was to keep the soundtrack from being overtly country western,

instead imagining a kind of Italian cinema on the plains. It's why the accordion is featured so heavily."

[\(Listen on Sound Cloud.\)](#)



Geoffrey Rush

The Book Thief

The Book Thief is based on a bestselling book about a young girl adopted by a German couple during World War 2, who learns to read with the help of her accordion-playing father, played by Geoffrey Rush. Rush learned to play the accordion for the part.

"I had an accordion tutor because it was not an instrument that I was familiar with," he said in an [interview](#). "It was a beautiful prop to have as an adjunct to the character. When I worked with the tutor, he said, I want you to carry the accordion around and put it down and pick it up ten

times a day, so that you have a familiarity with this instrument. It was like having lungs. It was like breathing. There was something magical in the flow. He would say, don't worry too much about the fingering, you're getting it, it's coming, but getting that flow of the bellows—that's what everyone's eye will gravitate towards. Hans is an amateur accordionist who plays for pure pleasure."

The film is directed by Brian Percival (*Downton Abbey*) and also stars Emily Watson.

Gigs and shows



Swedish Yuletide
Saturday, December 7
10 am-4 pm
Cyclorama/Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street
www.sweaboston.org
The SWEA Fair and Holiday Celebration, featuring accordionist Nils Lundin .



Neopoli
Sunday, December 8, 7:30 pm
YMCA Theatre, Cambridge
www.brownpapertickets.com
Musica di Natale--A traditional Italian Christmas



Christmas Celtic Sojourn
Cutler Majestic Theatre, Boston (December 15, 19, 20, 21, 22)
Hanover Theatre, Worcester, MA (December 17)
www.wgbh.org
 WGBH radio host Brian O'Donovan assembles musicians, singers, and dancers from around the Celtic world. Featuring Mick McAuley from Kilkenny on accordion.

Lady Kielbasia's Holiday Extravaganza with the Ladies Accordion Orchestra
Saturday, December 21, 7 pm
Arts at the Armory, 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville
www.artsatthearmory.org
The Ladies Accordion Orchestra, which includes several MAAA members, performs in Lady Kielbasia's annual Holiday Extravaganza

Gary Morin
Drawbridge Puppet Theatre, Lunenburg
Friday, December 27, 7:30 pm
www.drawbridgepuppets.com

MAAA member Gary Morin returns to this Friday Night Concert Series. Seats can be reserved online and paid for the night of the performance at the box office. All ticket sales will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

Keep up-to-date with the Massachusetts Accordion Association by visiting our [website](http://www.maaccordion.org):
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

Fratelli Rocca
Sunday, December 8, 2-5 pm
Sons of Italy Hall, 520 Pleasant Street, Watertown



Fratelli Rocca return for a local Christmas performance. The Ciociaro Social Club and other Italian American clubs in the area have organized their annual appearances for several years.

Fratelli Rocca--brothers Antonio and Benedetto--were born in Sora, Italy, near where many members of the Ciociaro Social Club originated. They have been studying accordion since the age

of 7, with a focus on Neapolitan music. In Italy they often perform with the singing percussionist Tony Cardone.

Tickets are \$20 per person and coffee and sweets will be served. For tickets, please email Tony Marini: amarini@aamcpa.com