



MASSACHUSETTS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION

Volume 9, Issue 5
July 2015

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.

Ciociaro Social Club
144 Bridge Street
Newton, Massachusetts

Next meeting:

July 26, 1:30 pm

Detailed meeting info is available on our website:

www.MAAccordion.org



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Send news and story ideas to the MAAA newsletter editor

Catherine Coleman

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MAAA celebrates Sam Falcetti Day

The Massachusetts accordion community came together at MAAA's June 28 meeting to honor Sam Falcetti--renowned accordionist, musical pioneer, conductor, professor, competition judge, and founder of Falcetti Music. The heartfelt musical afternoon included an open mike with the theme "Songs Sam Taught You" and presentation of a

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Members of the MAAA Board of Directors and the Falcettis. From left to right: Lewis Howes, Carmen D'Angelo, Tony Marini, Ed Wawrzynowicz, Sam Falcetti, Jim Avedisian, Peggy Falcetti, and Rocco Scenna. Photo: Carol Avedisian

UPCOMING MEETINGS

July 26: Open mike with Big Band theme

August 23: Ray Cavicchio brings his accordion

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special award. Welcoming everyone, Tony Marini, MAAA President, observed that “Today is Sam Falcetti Day” while noting that Sam remains very active in the accordion world, teaching more than 30 students ages 10-75 years old who come from throughout New England for their lessons and leading the Roland Digital Orchestra, which performs on August 1 (see related article).

A native of Wilbraham, MA, Sam began playing accordion at the age of 10. He graduated from University of Hartford with a bachelor’s degree in theory and composition, and during the 1970s and ‘80s was an adjunct professor at Holyoke Community College and Westfield State University. His accordion college ensemble performed twice at Carnegie Hall. He was the conductor and founder of the Springfield Accordion Orchestra, which performed at the World’s Fair in Japan in 1970, the David Frost Show with Roberta Flack, and the Coupe Mondiale in New Zealand in 1980, among many other prestigious appearances.



*Sam Falcetti at the MAAA meeting.
Photo: Carol Avedisian*

As founder of [Falcetti Music](#), a full-line music store in Massachusetts, he provides Roland V Accordion sales, service, and instruction and is the distributor for all of New England. In October 2011, Sam represented the US as a judge at the 5th Roland International Festival in Rome.

In April 2013 Sam conducted the first digital accordion orchestra in the country, which featured 20 Roland accordion players from across New England, at the Accordion Teachers Association of Massachusetts annual festival. (You can see and hear the orchestra on Youtube.)

Saluting his colleague and friend at the MAAA celebration, Paul Monte recalled creating the Massachusetts Accordion Teachers Association
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*Performing during the meeting’s open mike session, which was themed “Songs Sam Taught Us,” Jim Avedisian dedicated his vocal-and-Roland performance of On the Road Again to Sam, then demonstrated the Roland’s versatility with renditions of Love Me Tender and La Vie en Rose.
Photo: Carol Avedisian*



*Carmen D’Angelo: “I’ve been playing a Roland for about one year. It takes a lifetime! I’ve been working with Sam, trying to master the thing. It’s a lot of fun and a lot of challenges. I’m trying to do a little more with the bass than what we grew up with.”
Photo: Carol Avedisian*

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with Sam, who he described as “A great teacher and performer, a great guy and pal of mine. Sam has played the whole gamut of the accordion, from the acoustic to the Roland.”

Accepting his award, Sam remarked, “This is a great day for me. All through life all I needed was to have a goal. I wasn’t seeking recognition--my purpose was to do my job. In 1952, when I was a senior at Hartford College, I opened up my store. Three years later I had 450 students.”

He also recounted when and why he became an enthusiast of the Roland digital accordion. “I realized the Roland is a different kind of instrument. It can sound like any kind of orchestra you want. I had conducted major accordion orchestras, and now I had strings and oboes. We are embarking on a new instrument. You can put it on a memory stick and everyone can take it home and practice. You can change the key so it suits the singer. I can’t wait for the day the accordion becomes popular again. MAAA, keep up the good work!”

Don McMahon spoke on behalf of all MAAA in his keynote, stating, “This award is being given by people who simply want to say ‘Thank you’ for helping to advance the instrument that we all love. ‘Thank you’ for showing that one person can truly be a force for progressive change. ‘Thank you’ for bringing music into the lives of countless people for over five decades, and ‘Thank you’ for a lifetime well spent.

Reproduced below is the text of Don McMahon’s keynote address during MAAA’s June 28 meeting honoring Sam Falcetti. Many thanks to Don for granting MAAA permission to reprint it here.

Anselmo “Sam” Falcetti

by Don McMahon

At age 13, after 5 years of accordion lessons, I was ready to quit music, but a friend suggested I give it one last try at a newly opened studio, the Indian Orchard Accordion Center.

During my first visit, I immediately knew there was something different about this studio. The 26 year-old owner told me about the many group performances he had planned throughout the year, the wide variety of instructional material he offered, the AccordioPhonic Octet that I would audition for, and the individualized course of study he would use. This meant that I could learn more about playing in a band, plus a healthy dose of exercises, theory, and repertoire. I was sold. The year was 1960, and the young teacher was Anselmo “Sam” Falcetti.

It didn’t take long to realize that Sam’s brain was always cranking out new ways to expand the business, motivate the students, improve the level of instruction, and create a “home away from home” atmosphere where the students could interact both musically and socially.

On the business end, Sam was already planning the next market to tap and expansion to new locations. As we know, Sam could sell umbrellas in the Sahara, bikinis in Siberia, and accordions to everybody else. Then one of his customers said “If you really have pride in your business, you would put your own name on it” and so it became the Falcetti Accordion Center.

Motivating students was a priority for Sam, so he formed an organization of parents to assist in the efforts. Between Sam, his wife Peggy, and the Parents Club’s support and fundraising, they found local, national, and international venues in Italy, Japan, and New



Don McMahon delivered the keynote address at MAAA’s celebration honoring Sam Falcetti. Photo: Carol Avedisian

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Zealand for the orchestras to perform at, and even a spot on the nationally televised David Frost Show. Sam and Peggy were also founding members of the [Accordion Teachers' Association of Massachusetts \(ATAM\)](#), using participation in the yearly competitions to motivate students and improve their performance skills. To increase my personal motivation, Sam used to take me to local venues to hear and meet the top jazz accordionists in the area.

To expand and improve the curriculum and get the staff working together as a team, Sam started monthly teachers' meetings to give the teachers direction and to listen to their suggestions. He also initiated projects to generate an original curriculum to supplement what was lacking in the published material.

Although lessons and band rehearsals were scheduled on a weekly basis, we all felt comfortable showing up at the studio at any time to practice, rehearse, form impromptu groups, and socialize with the other students and teachers. This kept us off the streets, focused on positive activities, and many lifelong friendships, and even marriages, were formed there.

Sam was always very progressive, and he was one of the first to recognize the need to expand teaching beyond the accordion into guitar, organ, piano, and voice, so after several years Falcetti Accordion Center became the Falcetti Music Center, which then became a household name in western Massachusetts and northern Connecticut. Throughout his 50 years at the helm, he rarely slowed down his teaching, innovating, promoting, marketing, and expanding.

When Sam eventually retired, he headed straight for the old rocking chair at his cottage. That lasted about an hour and then he was off and running with his new love, the Roland V-Accordion. Sam approached me to help demonstrate the Roland FR-7, and as many of you know, it's futile to try to fight Sam's power of persuasion. So, even though I had been away from the accordion for over 25 years, I soon joined him in his new post-retirement adventure.

When we started planning the Roland workshops, I installed caller ID on my phone so I could prepare myself each time Sam called to discuss his latest suggestions, and believe me, there were many. Those of you who have attended those events can testify to Sam's youthful energy, contagious enthusiasm, and passion for the Roland. To someone of my advanced age, he can be exhausting, which is why my wife affectionately calls him the Energizer Bunny.

I've met a few people who thought Sam was just a salesman and promoter, but those people have not experienced the passion that he has for the instrument, the music, and his clients. Those of you who have purchased a Roland are well aware of his free programming lessons, the semi-annual workshops he puts together, and, of course, the Roland Digital Accordion Orchestra. These are the kind of extras that grow out of his love of music and the music business.

What I've been describing is only from my own personal perspective, and I wouldn't be the musician I am today without him, but Sam has also touched the lives of thousands of students, parents, teachers, customers, and associates. He has always been a force for positive change in the industry and in the lives of the people he's taught and worked with throughout the years.

Sam has, of course, received many awards for his accomplishments, some were for business, some were for marketing, and some were for community service. This award, however, is being given by people who simply want to say "Thank you" for helping to advance the instrument that we all love. "Thank you" for showing that one person can truly be a force for progressive change. "Thank you" for bringing music into the lives of countless people for over five decades, and "Thank you" for a lifetime well spent.

New England Digital Accordion Orchestra performing August 1

by Jim Avedisian

What do Sam Falcetti, Carmen D'Angelo, Tony D'Eramo, Guy Lombardi, Jan Miller, and Jim Avedisian have in common?

They are all Massachusetts Accordion Association members who are participating in one of the most unique orchestras to be found anywhere in the world--the New England Digital Accordion Orchestra conducted by Sam Falcetti.

Accordion orchestras have been around for quite a while, but none until recently has had the ability to sound not just like accordions, but a great many different orchestral instruments, taking advantage of the great musical capabilities of the Roland V accordions.

The upcoming performance will be an encore to the first performance of the orchestra, which performed at the 51st Annual New England Music Festival in Newton, MA. Building on its fine performance there in 2013, Sam has the orchestra on track to do a great job at the Mount Carmel Festival as the opening orchestra for Deana Martin, who is Dean Martin's daughter, and Bobby Rydell, who will be performing in concert at 8:00 pm.

The orchestra will be performing from 6:00-7:30 pm on a separate stage under a big tent. This is the newest orchestra in music, created from

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL SOCIETY PRESENTS THE 90TH ANNUAL ENFIELD

Italian Festival

DIRECT FROM LAS VEGAS
SATURDAY NIGHT - AUGUST 1ST

Deana Martin Show

With Special Guest
Bobby Rydell

SHOW STARTS
8:00 PM

Orchestra Performance
6:00-7:30

For More Information:
samfalcetti@gmail.com
www.falcettimusic.com

New England Digital Accordion Orchestra
"Newest Sound in Music"
Sam Falcetti, Conductor

Delicious Italian Food - Admission \$2 - Free Parking 93 Park Avenue, Enfield, CT

Roland digital accordions and is history in the making!

The orchestra will be performing many genres of music including Italian, Broadway, Jazz, Standard, Classical, Ethnic, Country, and even some Rock. The listener will hear horn and wind sections, strings, guitars, rhythm sections, and of course the accordion itself in beautifully orchestrated arrangements.

In addition to the whole orchestra, some of the members will be entertaining the audience with solos and duets. Rumor has it that I may be one of the soloists playing a very well known song, but you didn't hear it from me!

Our conductor, Sam Falcetti, conducted the Springfield Accordion Orchestra in Japan, Italy, New Zealand, and the USA in the '70s. He directed the orchestra on National TV on the David Frost show and his Westfield State University Accordion Ensemble performed twice at Carnegie Hall in NYC. Like any good conductor, Sam has worked us hard and the show should be great.

New England Digital Accordion Orchestra MT. CARMEL 90TH ITALIAN FESTIVAL

Saturday, August 1, 2015

93 Park Avenue, Enfield, Ct.

Admission: \$2.00

Free Parking!

Delicious Italian food!!!