

Come to Our Next Music Program

2:00 pm Sunday October 19

Oyster Point Yacht Club
South San Francisco

See page 3 for directions



October 2015

A2TV Comes to the SFAC!



A2TV is an unusual quartet of two accordions, a tuba, and a violin with a unique sound both familiar and unexpected. They combine considerable classical training with an elegant sense of fun, and a style that effortlessly blends the sound of a 100-year-old violin with an electronic V-Accordion.

It started in the living room of a good friend with just two instruments—an accordion and a violin. At first, they were getting together for informal jam sessions in the company of friends; but soon they started to meet regularly and work on songs they liked. Before they knew it, they had two more

musicians joining in and A2TV was born. This is when they started to give performances to the public. All four performers have full working schedules, but they get together regularly and really enjoy working out their repertoire and their style.

Zachariah Spellman has been Principal Tubist for the San Francisco Opera Orchestra since 1977 and for the Marin Symphony since 1980. He is a member of the Golden Gate Brass and the Aurio Trio, and a featured soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, the Fremont Symphony, Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra, Peninsula Symphony, the Bay Bones, and the Youth Philharmonic of his hometown, Portland, Oregon. He is featured on the recordings of David Grisman, *Songs of our Fathers*, the Bay Area's *Thoth*, *Those Darned Accordions* and *Big Lou's Polka Casserole*, as well as many TV and radio commercials produced in the Bay Area. Zachariah can occasionally be seen and heard marching through the streets of Chinatown in the Green Street Mortuary Band.

San Francisco Opera violist **Natasha Vershilova** graduated from the Leningrad Conservatory, where she studied under renowned violinist Professor Yuri Kramarov. Before joining SF Opera, Natasha appeared as soloist with the Honolulu Symphony and taught violin and viola at Punahoe School. She was a soloist and member of Foyer Des Artistes Chamber Orchestra in Rome, and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra in New York. She performed as a soloist with Sinfonia San Francisco, Russian Chamber Orchestra, and San Francisco Chamber Orchestra among many others; and she also taught at Stanford University. Recently she has embarked on a new musical adventure as a tango violinist.

PLEASE NOTE: Technical difficulties necessitate a much abbreviated (and lower-tech) version of the newsletter this month; the full version will return next month. If you need any of the information normally found in each issue regarding teachers, performers, etc., please refer to any recent issue. All past issues are available online at www.sfaccordionclub.com/newsletter

Karen Hutchinson is a musician of such versatility that she moves easily from piano to accordion to organ, or from classical to hip-hop, without skipping a beat. She has been playing in the Aurio Trio with Rufus Olivier and Zachariah Spellman, and she is an organist at Church of the Holy Cross in Belmont, California. Karen studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris with Jeanne Marie Darré and with Adolph Baller, Philippe Entremont and Jorge Bolet. Karen is widely traveled, speaks four languages and continuously adds new instruments to her repertoire.

Konstantin "Kep" Protopopov was forced to divide his time between his love of computers and his love of music until he found an instrument that combined both: the electronic Roland V-Accordion. Born and educated in Moscow, Russia, Kep studied accordion with the famous Peter Shashkin; and later became a DJ for the Moscow club Zemlyanichnaya Polyana. Here in the Bay Area, Kep makes his living as a data architect, but music remains his passion. Kep is active both as an accordion player and as a sound engineer in many art and music events in the San Francisco Bay Area, including a well-known folk group Balka.

More Great Music for October



Pete Contino is the son of legendary accordionist Dick Contino, Pete's childhood instrument was accordion, but he switched to drums in order to go on the road with his father's band, which had a profound effect on him. While on the road, Pete would take his father's accordion back to his hotel room and practice for hours, as he was too young to hang out in bars. Pete decided to pursue a career playing accordion in Las Vegas, and performed extensively in major hotels along the strip. But he decided he wanted to do something different, and got a steady gig at an Irish pub where he focused on his singing and songwriting. He has since opened for Buckwheat Zydeco and Dr. John. In 2012, Contino signed with Blind Pig records. He did a few tours through the SF Bay area, fell in love with the whole music scene here, and decided to make Northern California his home. We are extremely honored to welcome Pete to the SF Accordion Club for the very first time!



Ron Harris began his accordion career at the age of 4½, studying in San Francisco with Armand Oliveras (1941-1945); Joe Lazzerin (1946-1948) and Angelo Cagnazzo (1948- 1951). Ron was about 12 years old when he began his lessons with Angelo and would ride the bus, carrying his accordion, from his family's home in Daly City. While taking lessons with Angelo in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, he could hear fellow student and future accordion legend Dick Contino practicing upstairs. He finished his studies with Leo Giusti (1951-1954) in Daly City. When he was 13, he performed on Horace Heidt's radio and TV talent show.



Merilee Buster has been a resident of the Bay Area since graduating college in '75, and is currently working as a legal secretary in San Francisco. She began studying music in college, but was soon frustrated with the academic approach to music and dropped out of music classes after three semesters. She waited about 12 years before trying to learn folk music by ear and, without the pressure to be perfect of classical lessons, rediscovered her love affair with music. Merilee has been playing fiddle, mostly Irish traditional with some American Old Time and some French country traditional, for more than 20 years and started accordion lessons some time ago. She says she's still striving to be a better player, and appreciates her teacher Nada Lewis' patience and amazing repertoire. Merilee loves playing accordion! She is a recipient of the SFAC Student Scholarship and a gifted student of the

accordion. We're proud to learn that this will be Merilee's first public accordion performance. Our best wishes to you, Merilee—we know you'll be great!

September's Program was Great!

by SFAC member Barbara Bruxvoort

Our **Jam Band** kicked off the September Sunday program with a nice rendition of "Your Cheatin' Heart," and the audience loved it. Everyone is invited to play with the jam band...come and join in! Play bass or right hand alone if you want, the fun is in trying! The main qualification is that you smile a lot.

President Lynn Ewing was just back from Italy, and emceed the meeting. Lynn gave a shout-out and thanks to early SFAC member **Ed Massolo**, attending after a long absence. Ed made the striking San Francisco Accordion Club sign, and also our stage. It was great to see you again, Ed.

It was a very hot afternoon, and the patience of the audience was well rewarded as the temperatures climbed to 93 degrees outside!

Lorenzo Luchesi



A dapper and charming almost-14-year-old with a plaid bow tie and a real accordion, **Lorenzo Luchesi** is a San Francisco Accordion Club Scholarship recipient. Lynn Ewing first learned about him when a friend texted his photo to her—he'd stopped traffic with a street performance. Many people at the club have followed Lorenzo's progress since, and it was great to have him perform at the club.

Lorenzo started out with "Volare," an upbeat, crowd-pleasing favorite. Then he took us into the shadows..."Light and Shadows" ("Luci e Ombre"), a French-style waltz. "It took a long time of my teacher telling me to count!" he said, and that long practicing paid off; his performance passed just technically skillful and was truly evocative. On that hot day full of "Luci," it was easy to imagine waltzing down the street from one patch of dappled "ombre" to another. His "Al Di La," was smooth and haunting, and the audience loved it. Our standing ovation encouraged him to encore, a spirited medley of "Jalisco," and "Cielito Lindo." This piece showed us the street performer's skill and swagger. Well done, Lorenzo!

The Lister Family—Gwyn, John and Pam



As this set began, I was curious to see if a family accordion group could be as coordinated as family singers are. And I can now say—yes! **Gwyn, John and Pam** began with "The Cocobird Flip," a sprightly piece played in perfect synchronicity. Then Gwyn and John "Whistle" as a duet; the piece has a French or maybe Austrian flavor. We could be waiting for the Pinocchio ride at Disneyland or waltzing on the terrace of the Mt Tam Tourist Club chalet. Then John introduced "Amore Renee," composed especially for him by Stas Vanglevski in honor of John's wife, Renee. The audience was melting in the heat with sweaty brows and beverage glasses, and now our hearts melted as well and we forgot the high temperatures.

Gwyn finished out the set with a solo rendition of "All of Me." She played the song played with humor and gracefully punctuated by an "oh, no, no, no" something she was "resetting" that we didn't notice.

We couldn't help smiling as we watched. It's harder to portray simple happiness than sadness or melodrama when playing, but Gwyn captured the happiness in this song beautifully. We understood why her children remember that crowds laugh and have a good time when their mom plays the accordion.

Xavier de la Prade



Xavier used the accordion to teach French in his 26 years at College of Marin in Kentfield and today is no exception. He handed out song sheets with French lyrics for us to sing along, and some of us went to the bar for a glass of cold white wine to get into the spirit.

Xavier asked us to "Boire un Petit Coup." Not only did he ask us to drink it, he asked us to sing along, but not to drink ourselves under the table. No worries, it was too hot for that anyway. (Wait; maybe it would have been cooler under the table.....)

He dedicated "Domino" to Dominic, the hard-working vice-president of our club. Did you know that "Après de Ma Blonde" ("Next to My Girlfriend") was written in 1692? We sang it and it seemed fresh to us! Then he played "Chevaliers du le Table Ronde" ("Knights of the Round Table"), which he said was, "a lot like "Oh! Susannah" for French people."

Xavier recounted a story about Edith Piaf. Edith's mother was an Italian street singer and her father a soldier in WWI. Edith stayed with her maternal grandmother who gave her wine in her milk so she would sleep. It must have been a lot of wine, as Edith went blind from the alcohol. She then went to live with her other grandmother who ran a bordello, but also took her to the shrine of Thérèse of Lisieux where Edith was cured of her blindness. We sang Piaf's "La Vie en Rose," "Hymne d'amour" and "Non, je ne Regrette Rien." We can be grateful to Edith for bringing us such wonderful songs before she left the world at age 47, and to Xavier for telling her story. (Xavier recommends the biography "Piaf" by Edith's sister, Simone Berteaut.)

Through the song she told us "non, je ne regrette rien; let it always be said we attempted what came..." and we certainly did in terms of singing along in French.

September's Featured Performer

Ron Borelli



When Lynn introduced Ron, she told of a new-found interest in jazz after taking up the accordion after a long absence after hearing **Ron** playing Art Van Damme's jazz arrangements. She loved Ron's improvisational interludes and, deciding she wanted to learn to play like that, took lessons from him for several years.

Ron took us all to school in a beautiful performance on his electronic accordion with a polished style that had the uncomfortably warm audience riveted. Even the little ones were listening..but more on that later.

Ron got the party started with the upbeat "Funiculi Funicula" and then played a 6/8 tune that begged a cross-step waltz, then came a dramatic transition to something in ¾. Everyone had cold drinks—all we were missing was the biergarten lights, the dance floor and the lazy bees in the sheltering vines overhead. Lynn asked for titles and Ron said he would have a quiz later. I'll have to go to night school as

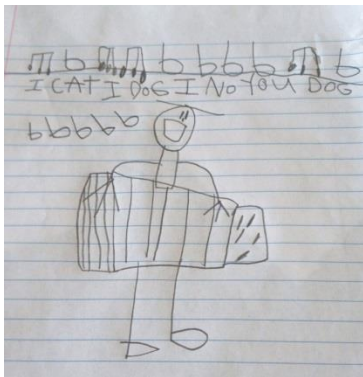
I didn't catch all the song names. A rose, is a rose, so it didn't really matter since the music was fantastic and the audience devoted.

The third piece was "La Piccinina" ("Ferryboat Serenade.") There was a ferryboat in the dock at Oyster Point and I was surprised that it wasn't inspired to get underway on the rippling bay at once! "There's a man who always plays the concertina, oh my / On the moonlit upper deck arena, by and by."

We heard "Under Paris Skies" and then Henry Mancini's "The Shadows of Paris", used for the opening titles of Peter Sellers' movie, A Shot in the Dark. I made the happy mistake of watching it on YouTube; it was enjoyable but I lost the clarity of my original vision of hearing the music of shadows chasing each other through the shade.

As Ron played us his own version of "Luna Mezza Mare", six-year-old Pele got up to dance to the steady walking base and won a cheer from the audience at the end.

After a self-described "Bach-ian" introduction based on the popular standard "All the Things You Are," enter the Jazz combo on Ron's Concerto Accordion with string bass in the left hand, and in the right, 8" flute stop, clarinet, trumpet and Hammond organ; the benefits of electronica! Will I be converted from my Aeolian passion? No, but now I have grokked the allure or perhaps I'm just a little in love with Ron Borelli.



The mambo classic "Sway" was next and we enjoyed hearing Ron sing. Somehow tucked away in there were dark tango embellishments and a couple flight-of-the-bumblebee-esque passages. Pele was inspired (when she finished dancing) to draw a picture of Ron singing. She represented the lyrics by the only words she knows how to write...plus lots of quarter and eighth notes—perhaps she'll be a composer of accordion music someday. She told me that the notes coming out of his mouth were his singing.

Ron talked about about this "most incredible year" in his career with regular engagements on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Doubletree hotel in Burlingame. He was also invited to play the soundtrack to The Godfather movie with the San Francisco Symphony, and he also played onstage with the San Francisco Opera.

He played three songs from The Godfather for us: the Theme, with bass legs...bass guitar.

What is it about movie music that is so emotional when played live? Perhaps it needs that quality so that it can maintain an emotional impact when layered with images and removed from the performance by the abstraction of the theater. So when it's played live, it has an incredible impact such as the exultant, gloating tarantella which ended the trio of songs.

We were treated to Astor Piazzolla's "Libertango," played with jazzy shading and drama. Lots of head bobbing, feet keeping time, table tapping amongst the overheated audience. Then he played a guessing game with a disguised popular tune. It was a tribute to his showmanship and the musicality that the audience was alert and along for the ride in the very warm room.

He played the Mariachi tune "La Boquina" as an interlude and then treated us to a piece from Two Women that he performed at the San Francisco Opera with tenor Pasquale Esposito. He also shared with us the story: "In March I was invited to play with the San Francisco Opera onstage in the Italian Opera Two Women, on the Sophia Loren movie of the same name. I was waiting off stage in a tiny crevice with my accordion along with a standup bass player and a drummer and their instruments as well! When we practiced, I was so nervous but I reassured myself by saying no one will hear me in that big orchestra. When I went to the rehearsal, however, I was directed to another building. It turned out I

was playing with just the bass player and the drummer for the conductor and the guy who wrote the opera! No pressure! And they dismissed us from attending some of the rehearsals after hearing us, so I guess that went good. The other thing that astonished me is I had like five people dressing me, and when I tried to button up my shirt, the girl said, "Oh, no, we do that for you." So I asked if she would do that for me at home, but she declined the invitation." Dominic kibitzed from the crowd, asking, "Did you propose to her?" Ron then played a piece from that opera, and with the scene set, we wished we were there.

We headed to the end of the meeting as we began, with Volare--as a sing-along this time. The last song had a personal note. His father had a band, and Ron and his sister played in it. His father always said, "Smile on the bandstand...we all have troubles, but if you smile you can share joy with other people." That's what Ron did with us that afternoon. He left us with "That's Amore," musically flirting with the audience with arpeggios and play that drew an appreciative laugh.

Honestly, we didn't notice how much hotter it had gotten outdoors until the meeting was over. Thanks to all the performers who gave us such wonderful music!

Condolences

SFAC offers sincere condolences to long-time member Ed Massolo, whose wife Isabelle passed away on August 23 after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease.

SFAC Elections

It is that time again! Our Board terms are ending, and we need to replace two of our current members. We are so fortunate to have so many people who volunteer for SFAC on a regular basis. Serving on the Board is interesting, satisfying and fun! If you would consider serving as a Board member, please contact Dominic Palmisano at (415) 587-4423 or accord47@gmail.com. Continuing Board members are: President, Lynn Ewing; Vice President, Dominic Palmisano; Treasurer, Elaine Cooperstein and Secretary, Don Savant. Members at large are: Jean Butler, Robert Cooperstein and Shirley Brim.

Membership

Thanks to everyone who has renewed your SFAC membership. If you haven't yet renewed, take this opportunity to do so! SFAC Membership is \$35 per year for individual or family (\$5 discount for taking the newsletter online). If you're a lifetime member, we hope you'll consider making a donation to the club.

The San Francisco Accordion Club is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; your donation will be tax deductible. Donations help us defray the cost of our monthly music program venue at the Oyster Point Yacht Club, and providing you with quality entertainment month after month.

There are several easy ways to renew your membership. The easiest is on our website—join or renew using PayPal or a credit card at: www.sfaccordionclub.com.

You can also mail your renewal form and check to our treasurer. You'll find the membership form with all the information below.

SFAC Membership Renewal

Membership year begins 10/1/15

Please send a check for \$35 (mailed newsletter) or \$30 (email newsletter).

Name _____ Phone _____

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Email _____ Dues Amount enclosed: \$ _____

An additional donation of any amount will help our club thrive! \$ _____

Thank you for your generosity! Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail your check, payable to SFAC, to:

**Elaine Cooperstein
539 Elsie Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577**

Monthly Program Info & Directions

**Join us the third Sunday of each month
for our Monthly Sunday Music Program**

Come for fun and great music!! October 19 @ 2:00 pm Admission: \$6 for members, \$8 for guests. The jam band will play from 1:15-2:00. Visit us online at www.sfaccordionclub.com.

Oyster Point Yacht Club • 911 Marina Blvd • South San Francisco

DIRECTIONS: Traveling either north or south on Highway 101 in South San Francisco, take the Oyster Point Blvd exit and follow it to Marina Blvd. Be careful not to turn right onto Gull Drive, the right turn immediately before Marina Blvd. Turn right onto Marina Blvd and continue 0.7 mile, past the Oyster Point Marina gatehouse to the Oyster Point Yacht Club sign on the left. There is plenty of parking and ramp access.

**Newsletter of the
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