



# AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION

# Newsletter

The official membership publication of the American Accordionists' Association

January 2024

## From the Editor

### Welcome to the January 2024 Edition of the AAA Newsletter!

Reflecting back on the activities of 2023, please be sure to enjoy the AAA website at [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com) as it covers the events of the year as well as numerous new historical and educational articles showcasing the AAA's magnificent story.

My sincere thanks to our Newsletter Publisher, AAA President Frank Busso Jr. As always, I would also like to thank our secretary, Rita Barnea, for her outstanding work in helping source accordion events and news items to include in our Newsletter publications.

Items for the February/March Newsletter can be sent to [ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com). Please include 'AAA Newsletter' in the subject box, so that we don't miss any items that come in. As always, text should be sent within the email or as a Microsoft Word attachment if possible. Pictures should be sent as a high quality .jpg file (or similar) and the larger the file size the better. We can always reduce/crop the picture if necessary, however we are unable to increase the quality from smaller pictures. Please send your items as soon as possible to ensure they are included in the upcoming issue.

We thank you in advance for sending in your news items to include in the Newsletter publication and wish the very best for a wonderful 2024 ahead.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Friedrich, AAA Newsletter Editor - [ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ameraccordnewsletter@gmail.com)



## From the President

Happy 2024 to my fellow AAA members!

I hope your 2023 finished up strong with safety, health, and lots of accordion playing! One of my favorite parts of the holidays was helping my five youngest family members create a video they'll be able to enjoy every holiday season. Feel free to watch it here, and I hope you enjoy it! [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZCVBZE5aDw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZCVBZE5aDw)



Your AAA governing board has been working hard to produce a 2024 AAA events plan unlike any other year, so keep your eyes on [www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com) and future AAA Newsletters for more details.

One of our 2024 highlights will be the annual Elsie M. Bennett Accordion Composition Competition. I hope you'll visit <http://ameraccord.com/bennett.php> for full details on how you can contribute to the growth of new music for our beloved instrument. Submissions are due by April 12, 2024.

Finally, thank you to you, our dedicated AAA members. Your membership is vital to the advancement of our organization, and we are always thrilled to work with you in our continual pursuit of accordion promotion.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Very best wishes for a healthy and musical 2024,  
Frank Busso, Jr.  
AAA President

## Ready to Pursue your Childhood Dream and Compete for \$100,000?

Growing up we all had a big dream...what if it's not too late?

**GET READY FOR YOUR...**

# SECOND ACT (wt)

A Major Network and the award-winning producers of **So You Think You Can Dance** bring you the TV show we've all been waiting for.

Did life get in the way of going after your true passion?  
 Were you gifted a talent that the world never got to see?  
 If you've waited decades to pursue your dream,  
 that opportunity is **HERE!**

We're on the lookout for **undiscovered talent** or **groups** ready to compete for a chance to win **\$100,000\*** and a fresh start!

**SINGERS • MUSICIANS • DANCERS • MAGICIANS • COMEDIANS • VARIETY ACTS**

**TO APPLY OR NOMINATE SOMEONE, VISIT:  
 SECONDACT.CASTINGCRANE.COM**

You must be 29+ and a legal U.S. resident to compete. See site for full eligibility.  
 \*Subject to change





The AAA is proud to collaborate with Casting Duo, a premiere unscripted casting company of hit shows like Project Runway, The Glee Project, and The Great American Baking Show. Casting Duo is now casting a new, heartwarming talent competition show for the Max streaming network: SECOND ACT!

SECOND ACT is on the lookout for an incredible accordionist deserving of their second act! The show will celebrate everyday, exceptionally talented people whose dreams were never pursued because life had other plans for them. SECOND ACT seeks non-professional – or formerly professional – singers, instrumentalists, dancers, comedians, and visual performers of all kinds, aged 29+, who want to share their talent and story of why they never had a chance to fully pursue their destiny.

The winner of the show receives a life-changing cash prize of \$100,000. Filming will take place in March 2024 (non-consecutive days within that month) and all expenses will be paid for those selected.

Read the “Deadline” article:  
<https://deadline.com/2023/11/magnolia-network-family-friendly-unscripted-slate-four-new-series-max-1235590109/>

Read the “Variety” article:  
<https://variety.com/2023/tv/news/chip-joanna-gaines-family-shows-max-magnolia-network-1235776691/>

To apply for yourself or to nominate a loved one, go to [secondact.castingcrane.com](https://secondact.castingcrane.com) and fill out an application today! For more info about the casting company, visit [www.castingduo.com](https://www.castingduo.com) or on Instagram @CastingDuo.

## Making Spirits Bright

The Dargaville Museum (New Zealand) proudly presented its 18th concert, “An Afternoon of Music with Kevin Friedrich and Friends” on December 3, 2023.

For this production, “Making Spirits Bright,” the Lighthouse Function Centre performance venue attached to the museum was once again filled with people, music, and community friendship as the talented variety of performers delighted concertgoers with their musical and dance offerings.

Hosted by AAA Board of Director Kevin Friedrich, the concert featured both up-and-coming performers, some taking to the stage for the first time, through to seasoned professional artists and groups. In addition to Kevin, fellow accordionists included The North Shore Accordion Orchestra (NSAO), Lionel Reekie and Maurice Jones, with other performers rounding out the 40 strong cast, including: vocalists Anna Collins, Jone Yelcich, Take 6, Ruth & Hans de Man, Martin Rhodes, Rivertown Singers, Roslyn Gilmour and Alanah Jones; pianists Laura & Annie Carey, and Nolene Osbaldiston; dance students from the



Leah Newlove Kaipara Ballet and Ballroom dancers Karyn & Ken Inder; the Dargaville Tamburica Orchestra with guest appearances by Frosty the Snowman (Elizabeth Card), Rudolph (Ros Gilmour), and Santa himself.

Plans are already underway for the fundraising series to continue in 2024, with the concerts sure to fill the Lighthouse with more incredible music performed by an array of talented artists.

The Dargaville Museum hosts the only public accordion exhibition in the Southern Hemisphere, “Accordion Gems, A Master Collection of Accordions Through Time.” Established and curated by Kevin Friedrich, the 140 instruments on display showcase the fascinating evolution of the instrument over its nearly 200-year history.



## The 2024 ATG Festival is honoring Joan C. Sommers

The 2024 ATG Festival is honoring Joan C. Sommers and celebrating her 90th birthday in Kansas City MO, July 23-27, 2024.

There are a number of special events including the ATG Festival Orchestra directed by Joan C. Sommers playing newly commissioned works by Gorka Hermosa (Spain) and Ian Watson (United Kingdom).

A superb array of international level performers will be showcased throughout the event, including Bridge and Wolak (Canada), Das Duo Kollektiv (Austria), Gorka Hermosa (Spain), Grayson Masefield (New Zealand), Mirco Patarini (CIA President - Italy), Stas Venglevski (USA), the UMKC Community Accordion Orchestra directed by Joan C. Sommers, and others.

A highlight of the festival will be a special competition for solo accordion: the ‘ATG World Cup’ offering a \$5,000 first prize and \$3,000 second prize.

For more information about the festival and rules for the Accordion World Cup Competition and all other activities, please visit [www.atgaccordions.com](http://www.atgaccordions.com).

23-28 JULY 2024

**ATG**

2024

honoring Joan C. SOMMERS

celebrating 90 years!

Welcome to **KANSAS CITY** Missouri

Don't miss this celebration to remember!

[WWW.ATGACCORDIONS.COM](http://WWW.ATGACCORDIONS.COM)

## Guy Klucevsek Releases “Hope Dies Last” Recording

After retiring from performing in late 2018, accordionist Guy Klucevsek has been busy composing, with the results being the release of his new CD, “Hope Dies Last.” Much of the music for this new album, 17 of the 19 tracks, are heard here for the first time, including the premiere of his six-movement suite for Laurie McCants’ multimedia piece, “Industrious Angels.”

Available now from Starkland, the new digital-only release of Guy’s music features pianist Jenny Lin, violinist Todd Reynolds, the Smudges (Jeff Gauthier, violin, Maggie Parkins, cello), and an avalanche of accordions played by Alan Bern, Bachtopus, Will Holshouser, Nathan Koci, and Guy himself, the works being presented as solos, duos, trios, and more.

The music varies from the simple, deeply moving “Dear Werner” and the hauntingly spare melody of “How Slow the Whistle Sang” to the wildly raucous clanging of a toy piano in “A Little Madness in the Spring” and the powerful blasts, from multiple, full-throated accordions, in “String of Garlands”.

In this album, Guy continues his tradition of writing “the world’s most abnormal ‘normal’ music” (Village Voice), wherein instantly appealing and seemingly simple pieces surreptitiously employ unusual and imaginative arrangements.

Guy Klucevsek (b. 1947) is a prolific composer and a world-renowned accordionist. In addition to composing over 150 works, he has also commissioned pieces from Mary Ellen Childs, William Duckworth, Aaron Jay Kernis, Jerome Kitzke, Alvin Lucier, Stephen Montague, Somei Satoh, Lois V. Vierk, and John Zorn.

Klucsevsek has performed and/or recorded with Laurie Anderson, Alan Bern, Bang On A Can, Brave Combo, Anthony Braxton, Anthony Coleman, Dave Douglas, Renée Fleming, Bill Frisell, Rahim al Haj, Robin Holcomb, Teiji Ito, Phillip Johnston, Kepa Junkera, the Kronos Quartet, Natalie Merchant, Pauline Oliveros, Estelle Parsons, Present Music, Relâche, Todd Reynolds, and Zeitgeist. His performances have graced the Adelaide Festival, the Berlin Jazz Festival, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Spoleto Festival USA, BAM Next Wave Festival, and the children’s television show, “Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood.”

Klucsevsek is a recipient of the United States Artists Collins Fellowship, an unrestricted \$50,000 award given annually to “America’s finest artists.” His 1987 project, “Polka From the Fringe,” a collection of polkas composed for Klucsevsek by Fred Frith, Christian Marclay, David Mahler, Peter Garland, John King, Mary Jane Leach, Elliott Sharp, Bobby Previte, Carl Finch, and others, toured worldwide and was released on two CDs by EVA. This project was named “Best Recordings of 1992” on WNYC’s “New Sounds.”

In 1996, Guy founded Accordion Tribe, an international ensemble of composer/accordionists. The ensemble toured internationally from 1996-2009, released three CDs on Intuition, and was the subject of Stefan Schwieter’s award-winning documentary film, “Accordion Tribe: Music Travels.” Klucsevsek has composed the scores for dance-theater pieces by Karen Bamonte, Angela Caponigro, David Dorfman, Maureen Fleming, Hellmut Gottschild, Victoria Marks, Stuart Pimsler, Claire Porter, and Sandy Silva. He has also composed for music-theater pieces by the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Ping Chong, Dan Hurlin, and Laurie McCants.

As a soloist, leader, and co-leader, Klucsevsek has released over 25 recordings on Starkland, Tzadik, Winter & Winter, Innova, Review, Intuition, CRI, Steinway and Sons, and XI. His Starkland recording, “Transylvanian Software,” was cited by Stereo Review as a “Recording of Special Merit.”

Guy can also be heard on John Williams’ orchestral scores for the Steven Spielberg films “The Terminal,” “Munich,” “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” and “The Adventures of Tintin.”

In 2020, Klucsevsek published his first collection of accordion scores, “Vignettes: Short Pieces for Accordion.” In 2022, he was honored with a 75th birthday celebration presented by Roulette in Brooklyn, and was commissioned to compose and arrange music for the international touring project “Little Amal Walks,” which celebrates hope and solidarity for displaced people everywhere.

The CD is available at [starkland.org](http://starkland.org), and for further information, please contact [gklucsevsek@mac.com](mailto:gklucsevsek@mac.com).



## Public School 203Q Students Enjoy the Accordion!

Music teacher Linda Holcomb shares, "At Public School 203Q in Bayside, Queens (New York City), the students think the accordion is cool! Ever since Cory Pesaturo visited our school, everyone wants to be in the Accordion Club! It was a very special treat for our school, and he made the accordion seem so cool to play! Thanks to the generosity of several people who have donated accordions to our school, we now have the largest accordion club in P.S. 203's history! We are proud of our 18 members this year."

The group is conducted by the school's music teacher, Linda Holcomb, with the assistance of community member and professional accordionist, "Papa Joe" DeClemente. Papa Joe inspires them to be better accordionists. Among the many things he does for them, he also fixes their accordions!

Linda said, "We enjoy performing for concerts and events in our school, and we love taking our show on the road, into our community. During December, the group played holiday songs at several locations. The students always come home from those trips so excited, having experienced how their music can really be a blessing to others."

The 9- and 10-year-olds from Bayside, Queens, who make up "The Squeeze Box 18" excitedly prepared for their holiday concerts. Their director, Linda Holcomb, is elated that this is the largest group the Oakland Gardens School (PS 203) has ever had! Linda shares, "We have 18 accordionists this year! It's all thanks to "Papa Joe" DeClemente, who has looked tirelessly for 12 bass accordions for us. In the past, we were lucky to have 12 working accordions, but this year, I am delighted that we are able to give 18 students the opportunity to learn this wonderful instrument!" There are so many students who want to be in the accordion club that there is now a waiting list.

P.S. 203Q, which which may be one of the only elementary schools in the five boroughs of New York City that has a student accordion band. The school started their accordion band 15 years ago. They meet once a week at the beginning of the school day to practice various songs that they will perform throughout the year.

"Papa Joe" volunteers his Monday mornings to help Mrs. Holcomb with the accordion club. "He is a huge asset to our program!" remarks Holcomb. "The children love him, and so far, he's been able to fix just about anything that a 9-year-old can break on an accordion!"

The school winter concert was held on December 17, 2023, where the accordionists performed their rousing renditions of "Jingle Bells," "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel," and "Silver Bells." Other holiday performances included December 10 at the Bayside Hills Civic Association Outdoor Holiday Lighting Celebration, December 12 at the Oakland Gardens School Winter Concert, and December 14 at the Bayside Senior Center.

For further information or if you have additional 12-bass instruments available as donations to expand their accordion program, please contact Linda at [lindaholcomb203@gmail.com](mailto:lindaholcomb203@gmail.com).



## Mario Tacca & Mary Mancini Present their 29th Annual Christmas Concert

Mario Tacca and vocalist Mary Mancini presented their 29th annual Christmas Concert on December 15, 2023 at the Church of the Assumption in Peekskill, NY. The concert proudly featured the Hudson Valley Accordion Ensemble as they presented a delightful evening of nostalgic music of the Christmas season.

AAA Board of Director Mario Tacca was born in Italy. During his childhood, his family moved to the Alsace Lorraine region of France where he began his musical studies. This is where his love and desire to play the accordion began. An accomplished musician, Mario Tacca dazzles audiences across the US and around the world with his outstanding virtuosity and his exciting interpretations of international music, the classics, and pop. Internationally acclaimed vocalist Mary Mancini has been featured in the New York Times, the Forth Worth Star-Telegram, and the Journal News and has performed in a variety of venues around the world. Able to sing in eight different languages, she is adept at pop, show tunes, operatic arias, and sacred music and has received worldwide acclaim.



As a dynamic and popular performing duo, they have completed two concert tours of China. As guests of the China Ministry of Culture, they toured five cities in three weeks and performed with three symphony orchestras. Joining them on their tour was highly acclaimed Chinese tenor, Douglas Song. In addition to performing with the Symphony Orchestras, some of the most memorable moments included a performance held at the 1600-seat True Color Jazz Supper Club in the booming city of Shenzhen and in the 3500-seat Golden Opera House.

The 29th annual Christmas concert is available on YouTube at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbGfmXvQACM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbGfmXvQACM).

## Roland Digital Orchestra

Where can a lover of music witness a musical ensemble consisting entirely of accordions, accompanied by two vocalists, a drummer, and guitarist that combines the sounds of nearly every instrument and a song list from nearly every genre on the planet into a single concert?

The answer is in a concert performance of the New England Digital Accordion Orchestra, which has its roots in Western Massachusetts. The orchestra is the first of its kind in the US and one of only two known throughout the world, according to founder and conductor, AAA 2nd Vice President, Sam Falcetti, of Wilbraham, Massachusetts.

“Close your eyes and you won’t imagine that you are listening to a group consisting mostly of accordions,” says Falcetti. The group uses Roland digital V-Accordions. According to Falcetti, the instrument, which dates to 2004, “has been aptly described as ‘an orchestra in a box,’ and each accordion can perform the sound of multiple instruments playing at one time with tone and expression.” The orchestra’s repertoire ranges from Broadway show and Hollywood film tunes to country and rock ‘n’ roll, and from Dixieland to polka classics.

Formed in 2015 by Falcetti, whose family founded and still runs the Falcetti Music stores, the orchestra currently features performers representing five of the six New England states. The group has performed at the Eastern States Exposition and other regional fairs as well as appeared as an opening act for Deanna Martin and Bobby Rydell at the Italian Festival in Enfield.

The orchestra most recently performed at First Night Chatham, featuring 70 entertainment acts from around the country, on New Year’s Eve in Chatham, Massachusetts. The group first performed there in 2019 and was



welcomed back again in 2022 following two years of event cancellation due to COVID. Videos of the performances can be viewed on YouTube and Facebook by searching “New England Digital Accordion Orchestra.”

To learn more about the orchestra, contact Sam Falcetti at 413-204-5522 or [samfalcetti@gmail.com](mailto:samfalcetti@gmail.com).

## 2024 Accordion Seminars - Dr. William Schimmel

2024 will mark the 30th anniversary year of the Accordion Seminars. More is better. This has been our philosophy for 30 years - and we're proud of it: Staggering Variety, Overflowing Ideas, Developed Ideas, Ideas in Process, Success, Failure, Encouragement, by Curator Dr William Schimmel.

Over the 30 years, we've built a culture, we've built a community. Some call it a non culture - some call it a non community. Some call us weird - some say it's all been said and done. We do still do weird - and we do new takes on old stuff (most of them new to the Music Community - Non Accordionists at large - therefore new to them), which still raises the question: "What is this thing called "New Music?"

There are a few points to ponder: The great director Peter Brook talked greatly about "The Empty Space." Accordionists start with a "Full Space" and add more and more. Great artists start practicing slowly until they are ready to play at tempo. Great accordionists start faster and eventually slow down due to tangled fingers. We think they all lead to the same place.

We're not a Fringe Group. We never were. We put on our lab coats and get to work and so can you - virtually.

Topics will include:

- The Art of Audience Participation/The Sing-a-Long
- Embracing the Maximalist Dimension (The Art of Clutter)
- Faking/Improvising - are they the same?
- Working In the Video Dimension
- The Varieties of The Mexican Hat Dance and The Hokey Pokey
- Classical or Classic
- Cassettes are back - giving "Ye Olde Accordion Sound" a return
- The Artificial Intelligence of the Accordion before Artificial Intelligence
- The Pot of Gold at the end of The Rainbow
- and much more to follow - with participants, in future articles

The annual event will be held virtually July 26-28, 2024 with the fee of \$165 covering the weekend. Master classes will be held 3-4 PM and the Concerts 4-5 PM, with the attendance link being sent out prior to each event.

This event is sponsored by the Accordion Global Association with the catch phrase being: The seminars, they never bore - our favorite words are: more! more! more!

For further information: [Accordionbill@gmail.com](mailto:Accordionbill@gmail.com)

