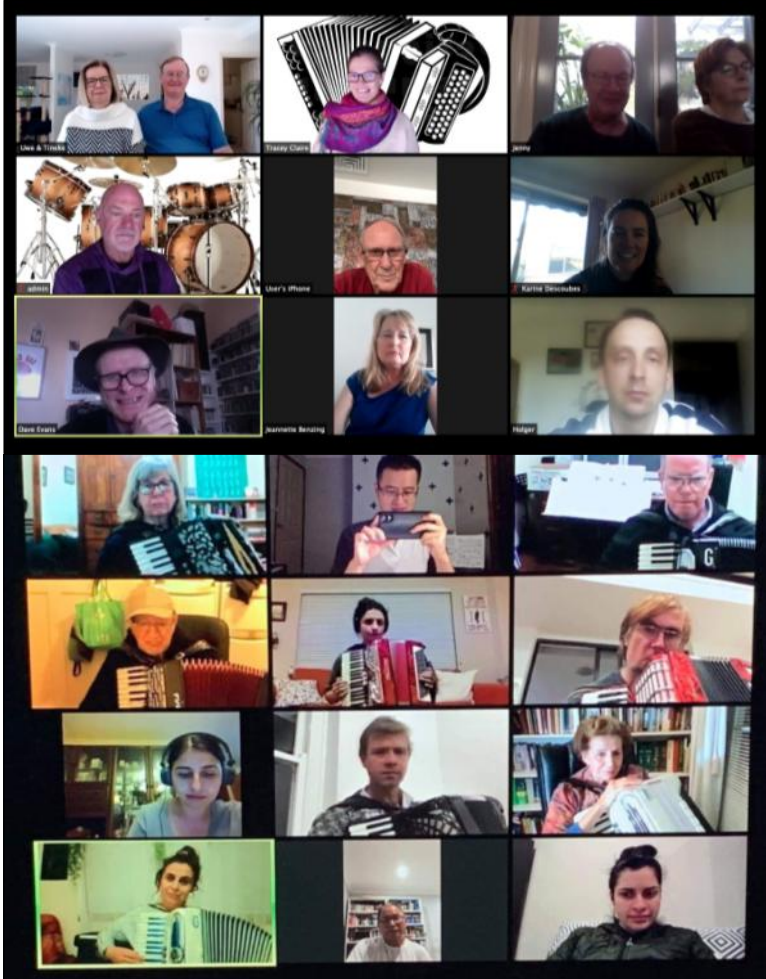


THE ACCORDION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.

# ACCORDION REVIEW



J U N E     2 0 2 0

VOLUME 37 ISSUE 2

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*Cover: Victoria and NSW Zoom sessions during Covid-19 Pandemic.*

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## *Hello from the Editor*

Firstly some sad news with the passing of John Cras in April at the wonderful age of 90. John was an active member of the ASA and loved the accordion. On behalf of the ASA I would like to pass on our condolences to Barbara and his family at this sad time. A tribute to John is on page 16-18.

Covid has caused many of us to become square! Zoom is presently the preferred method of face to face communication with family, work colleagues, friends and social groups. Musicians all over the world have collaborated to produce some wonderful music using this technology. ASA NSW and Victoria organised Zoom sessions with their respective groups and it was pleasing to see accordionists from other parts of Australia join in with NSW and play along, details page 7 -9.

While we are on the subject of Covid, guess what George Butrumlis got up to in February? Check it out on page 11!

‘Music for Mateship’ was an initiative to encourage people to play the Last Post at the end of their driveway when isolation prevented Anzac services being held across the country. It may not have been the instrument envisaged by the organisers however several accordionists responded to the call to pay their respect and kindly sent in their photos, details pages 13, 14. Also an accordionist in New Zealand on page 23.

Most of us know the accordion as a versatile instrument, capable of creating music from any genre. Comments such as “*you can’t play that on the accordion!*” is often incorrect. It may just require a bit of initiative, creativity and to think outside the square. George Butrumlis touches on this subject in his article and although we may have heard it before, I think it is essential that we remember this important point if we wish to expand our repertoire.

Hope you enjoy this edition and please stay healthy and safe.

*Cheryle*

## *Presidents Report*



Welcome everyone to what we hope will be a turning of the tide regarding Covid19 and the huge impact that it has had on our lives. While it has been great to see how many people have dealt with the difficulties that it has presented us with, we definitely look forward to returning to a more normal state of affairs with the possibility of getting together and congregating as we are familiar with. As I said last time I wish you, your families and friends the best.

As some of you would know, we recently changed our rehearsal technique to align to the governments firm social distancing regulations. We decided that Zoom meetings would be the most adequate platform to use. It is unfortunate that due to download speed, Zooms audio preference filter and processer speed requirements we could not rehearse in a large group, as we did before. So, to work within these limitations we worked out the best way to provide people with a beneficial rehearsal was to have a single participant carry the song while other players joined in and played with the host in a muted capacity. This works remarkably well. Players from all over Australia have started to join us. Many of these people live a substantial distance away from major cities and towns and are unable to attend the typical type of rehearsal that we normally have. It has been great to see these new members attending. With a greater community that previously we did not reach we have grown our membership base.

As the restrictions are lifting we are now trying to work out how we can involve those players in these far off places. We are looking at incorporating the video component into our normal weekly rehearsal and although we are not currently allowed to physically gather, as

soon as we can we will let everyone know how we will involve them. Follow your emails and Facebook notifications and we will keep you up to date with information.

The New Zealand Accordion Association hosted a reduced size South Pacific and New Zealand Accordion championships in May. Personally I was looking forward to attending. My fingers were crossed all the way through till the flight was finally cancelled. In light of this I decided to watch these great competitors on line as everything was recorded. You can see the competition here <http://www.accordions.com/accordion/2020/30May.htm> and you can also have a look at their site <https://www.accordion.co.nz>. I look forward to attending these competitions next year and I hope that some of us in Australia will be able to attend.

In my last report I talked to you about the London Accordion Orchestra. They were the forerunners in this pandemic. During this time they recorded and produced the two following pieces, follow these links to find out more. <https://youtu.be/uSCCiMWW9Y4>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DxyKiBuGjc>, both of these were virtual performances by the Global Accordion Project Orchestra and well worth watching. For more information look here <https://www.londonao.co.uk>,

To finish up I would just like to mention that the AATA (Australian accordion teachers association) will be looking at holding their annual competition on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2020 pending restrictions. We will keep you informed with our normal email and social media platforms closer to the event. If you are interested in additional information go to <https://www.aata.org.au>, for further inquiries. I would like to wish all members the best and hope that we return to normal activities soon.

Looking forward to playing music with you soon.

*Benny*

## *We're all Square since Covid hit!*

Like musicians all over the world, our Sydney ASA orchestra has been unable to meet in person or perform to an audience for some time. No rehearsals and lots of cancelled gigs.

This has meant a major readjustment to our Monday evenings. Still, as readers of the Accordion Review well know, even a pandemic will not stop the music, and the band plays on.



Every Monday night we have been meeting on Zoom and revisiting some old tunes and learning some new ones. We circulate the music ahead of time and players can practice during the week.

On the downside, the sound on Zoom can be a bit dodgy and we can only play along individually to one lead player at a time. There can be frustrating moments trying to get everyone connected and, of course, playing virtually is not like being together face to face.

However, there are upsides to virtual accordion. Cheryle Mills has been able to be back in the group from her home in Mallacoota Victoria. We have also been joined by some great new friends from Bundaberg, Nowra, Canberra, and Ballan in Victoria. Some of these new friends share their accordion zooming experiences on the following page. The Zoom format has also given people a chance to perform a solo for the group and a number of volunteers have been brave enough to give this a try. We have also been a bit more adventurous in our choice of music and have ranged from rock to blues and back to polkas.

Most importantly, we have been able to stay in touch and safe through this difficult time. We long to get back together but, when that time does come, we will be sorry to say goodbye to our out of town players.



### **Amy — Bundaberg Qld.**

*On 16 April I responded to expressions of interest on Facebook about linking up on Zoom & as I just had learnt about Zoom, took the opportunity to follow it up. The piano accordion has always been a part of my life as my father had played the instrument, so it was from early teenage years, that I was encouraged to play same.*

*Needless to say, in my senior years, I have been fortunate to belong to the Bundaberg Accordion Group (U3A) where we play every week, and participate in our local community - until - the Virus descended upon us & were forced to close down.*

*Consequently, it has been a joy to play with like-minded people & given our minds & fingers, to stay connected in the world of accordions. Music is a healing experience to improve our health & wellbeing & fun ways to warm your spirits.*

**Amy Guppy**



### **Jennifer — Bundaberg Qld.**

*The Bundaberg Accordion Band has been part of U3A (University of the Third Age) since 2000, so this year is its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Celebrations have been postponed until next year, due to Covid-19 restrictions. The group currently has 20 members, but has not had a rehearsal since early March, when restrictions first came into force. Our annual concert has also been cancelled, much to the disappointment of our “fans” who pack the hall every year!*

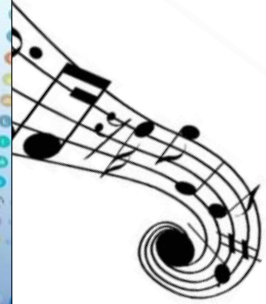
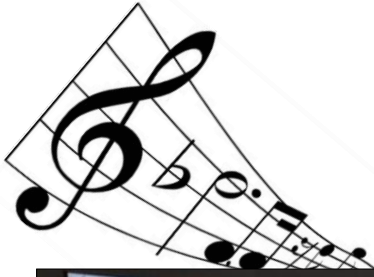
*Thanks to a post on Facebook, some of us have been able to join a Zoom gathering of accordionists, courtesy of the Sydney group. This has been an enjoyable experience, a completely new concept and a wonderful way to meet and interact with accordion players from many parts of Australia. Each week we've been issued with a new piece of music, and then had the pleasure of performing it with the rest of the group.*

*Getting together with others via Zoom has been really great, and it would be nice to continue this way, but I know we are all looking forward to playing 'live' again.*

**Jenny James**

*(Tutor/Conductor, Happy Notes Accordion Band)*





Sometimes  
**Music**  
is the only thing  
that gets your  
mind off of  
everything  
else.





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## *George goes cruisin' during Covid!*

I got a call from a colleague at the end of February. "George", he said, "I do these great gigs on cruise ships, been doing them for a few years now. Four piece band, 3 sets per night, 6 nights a week, good money, all food provided and cheap booze. One of our members has dropped out, would you be interested?"



This is right at the start of the serious stage of Covid19. I figured that the guy who dropped out probably did so because of Covid fears so I thought long and hard about it. The cruise was 2 weeks, local ports only: Port Melbourne to Adelaide, to Kangaroo Island, to Port Arthur, around Tasmania, back to Adelaide and Kangaroo Island one more time and back to Adelaide. Money's good, I'll do it! Keyboard provided on board and I'll take my white Galanti, it looks so beautiful.

Off we went. The gigs were fine and we played everything from Beatles to Piazzolla with the Kinks in between. The audience loved the accordion as did the band. A Day In The Life by The Beatles is a challenging piece to play on the accordion but it is so open to creativity and to completely forgetting how an accordion is supposed to sound.

During the days on board I spent most of my time on my laptop working on a bunch of new arrangements and compositions for the Melbourne Accordion Orchestra. We are now working with 2 fabulous singers, Alma Zygier and Cameron Goodall along with the odd surprise appearance by Robyn Archer, much to the audience's delight.

I prepared an arrangement of my favourite Piazzolla piece (not telling, it'll be a surprise), a new Randy Newman song, a hit by The Stranglers from the 80's and a beautiful song by Leonard Cohen.

This was all leading up to a performance at a major Melbourne festival

in June, a real coup for our orchestra which we achieved on the basis of our outstanding performance with Zydeco Jump at the Caravan Club last year. We were told not to say anything about the festival until after the official launch of the program but Covid intervened and the festival is postponed until who knows when so I still can't say which festival it is. I'm confident that when it's re-scheduled we'll be on the program.

The cruise was cut short and we headed back to Adelaide having stopped at Kangaroo Island but having not made it to Tasmania. They flew us back to Melbourne (musicians disembarked first!) and we've all been keeping a very low profile since then.

It's very disappointing that the festival is postponed but we're all in the same boat. I lost all my other gigs that were booked. Sadly the Caravan Music Club has closed permanently due to the pandemic. We had a date booked in November for another Zydeco Jump/MAO show and I'm now negotiating with the Memo Music Hall in St. Kilda to present our show there. That will go ahead subject to Covid19 restrictions. We'll see what the situation is as we get closer to the date.

As you all know my working philosophy with the Melbourne Accordion Orchestra, and indeed with myself, is that as accordionists, we should try to see ourselves as musicians first. We should try not to be restricted to traditional accordion repertoire or music written for the accordion. We should try to play what is not expected from the accordion. We should try to be adventurous and take on music from the rest of the great wide world of music. That means working out songs and pieces you want to play that there's no printed music for and it means thinking and searching hard for new repertoire to arrange or compose for accordion solos, mixed ensembles, orchestras etc.

That, I believe, is how we progress the accordion.

Best wishes,

*George Butrumlis*

# ANZAC DAY



Anzac services around the country on April 25th were prohibited due to the Covid shutdown. To let this important day pass without remembering our war heroes would not sit right for many, many Australians.

Australian musician James Morrison called on all brass players to join '**Music for Mateship**' and stand in their driveway at 6am and play 'The Last Post', it will create a feeling in communities around the country when people hear that tune and know that we are to remember our Anzacs that fought in all wars.

Very few of us can play brass instruments so why not on the Accordion! At the 2019 Maclagan Squeezebox Festival, 18 year old Sebastian Curtis from Dalby, Qld played a very moving rendition of the 'Last Post' and it inspired many of us to also give it a go on the Accordion. Several ASA members from across Sydney and in Victoria played the Last Post in front of their home. It was a moving way to remember our Anzacs in 2020. Let's we forget.

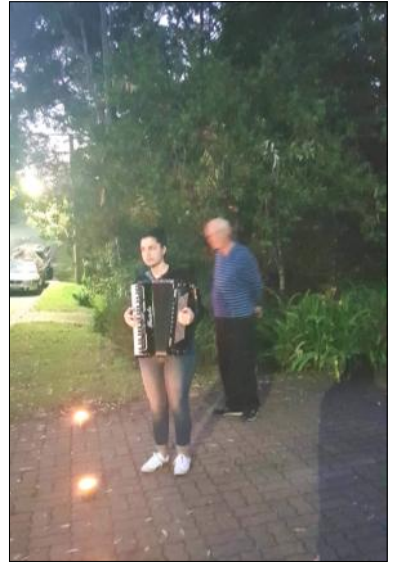


Glenny Grunfelder & grandchildren.





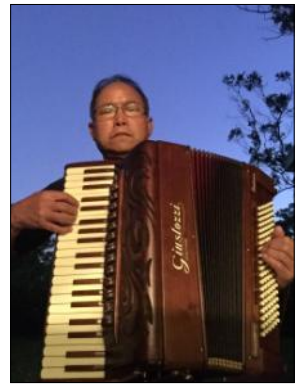
Sandra Mackay



Jedda Kassis



Cheryle Mills



Michael Lin







*In  
Memory  
of....*

*Johannes Marinus Cras  
17/9/1929 to 29/4/2020*

ASA member John Cras sadly passed away on April 29th at the age of 90 years after his battle with Parkinsons disease.

John loved the accordion and was a player in the NSW Orchestra many years ago. The NSW Orchestra was a regular visitor at his nursing home to entertain John and the residents and to play his absolute favourite tune 'Beer Barrel Polka'.

John loved his music and was sitting outside in the sunshine during Covid lockdown with a group of residents enjoying some music just prior to his passing.

Our thoughts go out to Barbara, family and friends..

We will miss you John.  
Rest in Peace.





## *Tributes to John Cras*

### ***Eulogy (extract) - by Johns daughter***

John was born in The Netherlands in 1929, and was very proud of his Dutch heritage.. When his family emigrated to Australia after the war in 1950, they had to build a new life from virtually nothing.

In 1973, while holidaying in Indonesia, this Dutch man met a lovely Aussie country girl, Barbara and a year later they were married. They were married for 46 years and had 2 loving daughters.

Music was John's passion and not long after he arrived in Australia, he took up the accordion and this became a lifelong hobby that brought him much joy. John was a performer, and with a microphone in his hand he relished the opportunity to give speeches at birthdays, weddings and other special occasions. For many years he was a member of the Rembrandt Club Male choir, performing at many locations around Sydney in full costume.

In the seventies and eighties, he was a member of the YHA folk dancing group. He led these dances playing his accordion and these evenings were enjoyed by many and he made numerous lifelong friends. This group was part of his bigger commitment to developing the YHA movement in its early days in Australia.

Later during the nineties, he joined the Accordion society (ASA) and once again this gave him an opportunity to perform, this time as part of an orchestra. Through this association he travelled to many Australian cities and even to New Zealand for their yearly festival and once again many lifelong friendships were formed.

Despite good health throughout his life, John was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease when he was well into his eighties. After a fall at home, he moved into a nursing home. Barbara visited him nearly every day however after a visit one Sunday afternoon in late March, the following weekend there was total lockdown at the nursing home. The stress of 5 weeks of lockdown with no visits from family took their toll on him and sadly John passed within a couple of days of restrictions being relaxed.

### ***Tribute from Vince Moschella***

John was a lover of the accordion and was around in the ASA even before I first arrived about 20 years ago.

I remember on one occasion at our Christmas Function, when things seemed to be a little too quiet, he stood up and did a not so perfect but entertaining performance. He said to me afterwards something along the line 'don't be scared to step out and try' and 'we need to hear the accordion'. God rest his soul.

### ***Tribute from Hera Antoniadis***

We are all deeply saddened to lose our dear friend John. I first met John in 1988/1989 at an ASA festival and John instantly started talking to me and explaining the different music being played during the competitions. He was very sociable and together with Barbara we had many ongoing happy events and gatherings at different festivals and concerts.

The decades have flown so quickly. John would come over to my home on Saturday mornings so we could play duets. We enjoyed the challenges of the different music and John's vast library of music was a true inspiration and opened my eyes to different cultural musical arrangements. He also contributed over many years to the ASA committee, and together with June Jones they undertook the mailing of the Accordion Review.

John idolised his family and extended family and he had a special love for the accordion and particularly the Scandali accordions!

There are no words to describe the loss and sadness felt by family and friends and John will always be remembered.

Many Blessings

Love from Hera Antoniadis



## Music for Life

### Meet accordion player Bob Bellini

*Extract from Flourish Magazine (Autumn 2020)*



Bob Bellini doesn't actually like the sound of accordions, but that hasn't stopped him playing one for 74 years "If I walked in on me playing somewhere, I'd probably walk straight out again," he admits. With a cheeky grin and his long hair in a ponytail, Bob also admits to occasionally making things up, but this sounds true enough.

Bob's main criticism of the accordion is "I prefer jazz and the accordion isn't exactly a jazz instrument." But it was the only instrument available to learn with his gran,

a professional music teacher, when he was growing up in Naremburn, on Sydney's Lower North Shore.

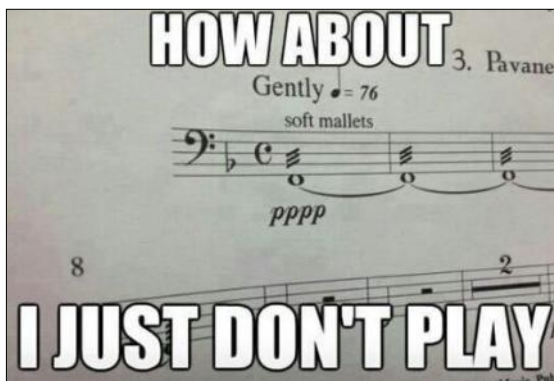
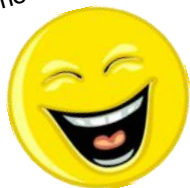
We had a piano at home when I was small, but we were in this two-bedroom house with 12 people, so the piano had to go," Bob says.

If you live near Bob at Australian Unity's Willandra Village and Bungalows in Cromer, NSW, you may have seen him play—he performs for "anyone who will offer me money or food".

"I soon learned that sitting on your own playing is boring as batsh\*t—getting out and playing with others is fun," he says. His Roland accordion works more like a synthesiser so bringing technology to music is a perfect mix for Bob. He spent most of his working life at IBM, before running his own consultancy. Sharing information is a skill he developed giving presentations at IBM. "I have a great memory for sounds, but when I started giving presentations, I didn't realise that other people didn't remember things the same way—you have to show them. But when you realise you can control an audience, it really feels great," he says.

He loves getting people to think—a gift learnt from his gran and great-gran, who were both proud suffragettes. At IBM, he loved working with young people, "they were game to try new things and always had brilliant ideas" - he still loves people who are willing to put themselves out of their comfort zones and try something new. That could be a child or a 97 year old neighbour who still thinks like a 35 year old.

Time for a laugh



## World Accordion Day Online Broadcast



Since 2009, each May 6th, the **Confederation Internationale des Accordeonistes** has been promoting **World Accordion Day**. Our first **WAD** was held on 6th May 2009, marking the 180th birthday of the accordion - May 6th 1829, the date the accordion patent was first applied for in Vienna, Austria by Cyrillius Demien.

The show hosts are **CIA** former President and current **CIA** Ambassador Kevin Friedrich and **CIA** Music Committee Deputy Chairman Grayson Masefield with technical assistance from **CIA** Public Relations **Harley Jones** and Accordions Worldwide staff.

The event is hosted on the [CIA Facebook Page](#) and was livestreamed simultaneously on [www.WorldAccordionDay.com](http://www.WorldAccordionDay.com)

### Final World Accordion Day Broadcast - International

by Christine Johnstone

The final [World Accordion Day](#) broadcast is now online at: [WAD2020](#)  
Earlier broadcasts, 6th May, 9th May, 23 May are also online at: [WAD2020](#)



The 4th episode included messages & performances from past [Coupe Mondiale](#) World Champions [Tutto a Dio](#) - [Augustinas Rakauskas](#) & Greta Staponkute - Rakau, Liu Zhao, João Campos Palma, Carmine Sanginetto, Mariya Kushnikova & Ma Qi.

## *Accordion Yellow Pages/Future Events - Cyberspace*

*by Harley Jones*



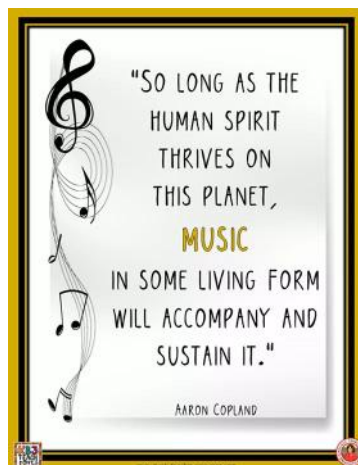
All concert, competition and festival organisers are reminded to list their Future Events in our yellow pages website. Its free to list and you can do it yourself. You can also change and update your listing yourself as further information becomes available.

The [accordion yellow pages](http://www.accordionyellowpages.com) Future Events calendar displays at the top right hand side of the [accordions.com](http://www.accordions.com) Weekly News in all 7 languages plus other popular sites such as the [USA News](http://www.usanews.com) and the [Diatonic News](http://www.diatonicnews.com).

Huge numbers of readers every year view the [accordion yellow pages](http://www.accordionyellowpages.com) Future Events, so all accordion event organisers are urged to take full advantage of this free service to keep the accordion community informed.

Source: [www.accordions.com](http://www.accordions.com)

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*NEWS FROM  
NEW ZEALAND  
ACCORDION ASSOCIATION*



*ANZAC DAY*

*Tracey Collins Emson—Accordion Entertainer*

On Anzac Day, as all services had been cancelled and we were asked to “Stand at Dawn at your driveway to Remember” my neighbour Soprano singer Rebecca Nelson and I teamed up to do a wee dawn performance for the neighbourhood playing Amazing Grace, Pokarekare Ana and God Defend NZ.

Rebecca is the official singer for the Royal NZ Navy. It was very special as many neighbours came out to honour the Anzacs



# *Global Accordion Project*

*contributed by Alison Worthington*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSCCiMWW9Y4>

As the world has closed its doors on live music performance, it has created an opportunity to view music in a whole different way. Many performers over the years have used technology for teaching, showing solo/ group performances or streaming live orchestras. The accordion world is no exception to this, and from lock down in the UK, Ian Watson - Music Director of the London Accordion Orchestra, and Principal Bass Player - Sam Cullen created the 'Global Accordion Project Orchestra'.

The call was put out on Facebook on the 21 March, a video was posted on the London Accordion Orchestra page, inviting players from around the world to be part of this Virtual orchestra. On Wednesday 8 April at 8pm, the premiere was live stream on Facebook, and later on Youtube.

The piece selected - Peace, by Ian Watson.

This piece was selected as the inaugural global project as it was composed by Ian Watson, and he released copyright. This piece was inspired by his visit to battlefields of Normandy and the beach landings of WWII.

Leaders of the sections: 1st - Julie Luck - UK, 2nd - Marco Rottig - Germany, 3rd - Grayson Masefield - NZ, 4th - Kevin Friedrich - USA, Bass - Liz Finch - USA, Principal Percussionist - James Hulme - UK.

There were 112 players from 15 different countries that submitted a video or audio file. Players used the LAO's 2017 performance at Union Chapel, as the backing or click track for their personal recordings. Each player's sound has been used, requiring 80 hours of editing to put this all together.

What seemed like a simple task, learn an individual part, play the part, and record your part, was not the case for many players. You needed 2 devices – one to play the recording and another to record what you were playing. You were given exact video instructions for portrait, distance at 50 centimetres and bright coloured clothing. The behind the scene photos of the camera and music stand set ups, have been quite creative, and shows the amount of time and effort that was required.

Congratulations for the initiative to Ian Watson and the London Accordion Orchestra along with the very talented editing of Sam Cullen.



## *Video competition for Accordionists*

*contributed by Gary Daverne*

The idea of holding a video competition to promote the accordion music of New Zealand composer, Gary Daverne, was the brain child of Harley Jones of Accordions Worldwide.

Play any one or more of Gary's compositions, video your performance and submit it as an MP4. Open to musicians of any age or nationality, no entry fee required.

And the prize? 1st prize of two round trip air tickets and accommodation, to New Zealand to the 2020 **South Pacific Accordion Championships**, 30-31 May 2020, Auckland, New Zealand.

Accordions Worldwide along with the support of the New Zealand Accordion Association and Viscount Records, have been thrilled with the response and plan to run the competition again next year in 2021.

The adjudicators, all from New Zealand, were: Stephanie Poole, Kevin Friedrich, Grayson Masefield and myself.

The winner was: **Vladimir Stupnikov** from St Petersburg, Russia, performing ***Tango 130*** <https://youtu.be/WFZ2T-5CMyY>

Because of Covid-19 Vladimir is unable to come to NZ at this time to take up his prize but looks forward to doing so in the future.

**Martin Sulc**, from Trebon - Czech Republic, was a Gold Award competitor, performing, ***Song of the Far North***. Very capably accompanied by Slovak pianist, Aneta Majerová, a graduate of the Žilina Conservatory of Music, Slovakia.

***Song of the Far North*** <https://youtu.be/-mmlwZE9JA>



## *New Accordion Ideas*

*contributed by Heather Masefield*

Ernesto Zurita Ruiz (USA) visited New Zealand in early March this year. During his visit he attended the **North Shore Accordion Orchestra** rehearsals in Auckland. Firstly he visited the Music Makers rehearsal (picture below) conducted by **Christine Johnstone**. He explained to the children that he is developing a new digital aided accordion learning system for children playing the accordion. Next he attended the Auckland Accordion Symphonietta orchestra rehearsal conducted by **Lionel Reekie**.

Upon his return to the US, he completed his semester at the University of Portland in Mechanical Engineering and wanted to send updates on his project to the **New Zealand Accordion Association**.

He said “The weeks following my visit, I began working on a rough physical prototype of my digital accordion learning idea. This was so I could show off something tangible at the University of Portland's Pilots Venture Challenge. This competition was held yesterday where I gave a presentation in front of judges who ranged in backgrounds from intellectual property attorneys, marketers, and product developers among others. My venture idea (which I named ‘Accord-On!’) placed second in the competition.

This provided me with a US\$750 prize money to help me advance my prototype and allowed me to participate in the semi-finals of the InventOregon competition at the end of September later this year.”

The **New Zealand Accordion Association** thanks Ernesto for his work and hopes he is successful in this upcoming competition and the development of ‘Accord-On!’.



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