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VOLUME 38 ISSUE 1

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COVER: ACCORDIONS ALFRESCO AT THEIR LIVE FACEBOOK CONCERT, SEE PAGE 9

(L-R)

Back row : Les Maroun, Ben Pattinson, Alex Zhao

<u>Middle row</u>: Dominique Granturco, Jedda Kassis, Michael Lin, Sandra Mackay, Amelia Granturco

Front row: Glenny Grunfelder, Maria Worthington, Sam Tripodi, Vince Moschella

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Hello from the Editor



Welcome everyone to 2021 which I feel it will be a much better year. Gigs are still rare but several accordionists I have spoken to mentioned how their commitment to playing the accordion has changed as a result of Covid isolation with more time available to practice. Were you one of those lucky ones and did your playing improve? An article by An-

thony Schulz in this edition explains his methodical practice regime and after reading it I realised I may lack a bit of discipline hehe so I've grabbed my notepad and endeavour to improve...refer page 10 for an insight into his practice.

How pleasing it is to include three new teachers into our Teachers Directory. Welcome Anthony Schulz (Melbourne), Paolo Campanari-Brancondi (Sydney) and Emma Smith (Adelaide). *Please note that Emmas email address has been corrected since the last edition, apologies Emma*. Refer pages 23,24.

We also have two additional Sydney accordion repairers, Reedworks (Miranda) and Matt Denton (Campbelltown), their contact details are on page 27 with an article on Matt on page 20.

How exciting for the Smiths in Adelaide to appear in an 'Amazing Race in Australia' TV episode and even more exciting when the contestants had to learn and perform the slap-dance to Pauls music, see what fun they had on page 7.

The poor accordion is always the brunt of bad jokes but do you know why? An article 'The Accordion gets its due' on page 17 provides a background to why it developed such a bad rap and how the accordion has developed since then, I hope you enjoy the article.

Thank you to those who sent in articles and photos and please keep them coming, without your input there would be no Accordion Review.

Regards,

Cheryle

Presidents Report

Welcome to the March edition of the Accordion Review and I hope you enjoy it. Our editor Cheryle Mills puts a huge amount of work into this Review and if you have news or a story for us, we would love to include it in our next edition, please email it to Cheryle.



We need to give the Accordion Society a good push and get ourselves back to pre-covid excitement levels. The start of this year was a little slower than others, but 2021 will still be great. The last event we held was our live Facebook concert of Accordions Alfresco last November which reached an enormous audience. Accordions Alfresco have been working hard on producing the next concert in this quarterly series which premiered on Monday March 15th on Facebook. We thoroughly enjoyed performing on the night and if you missed it please view it on the 'Accordion Society of Australia' Fb page and hope you enjoy it and look forward to viewing your comments and thoughts.

This year I would like to focus on how accordion players learn their repertoire/technique and would like to hear where you source your tuition. Maybe it is internet-based learning such as YouTube/Websites/Blogs, Private tuition with various tutors or group lessons and workshops. I will be having an in depth look at some of the pitfalls and positives that you need to consider when engaging in these different platforms/learning experiences. Later in the year we are planning to hold an Australia wide teachers conference. We will be looking at what we can do as teachers to help provide better source material and more current up to date teaching techniques.

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In regard to being up to date, the Australian Music Examinations Board has just recently updated their Accordion Syllabus. The current syllabus will remain active for 2 more years and you may use either the new or old syllabus. The main reason for the revision is that many pieces were simply not in print and unavailable. The AMEB only cater for the stradella bass system in this Syllabus. I urge people to enter their students in examinations as we need to increase numbers of accordion students sitting these examinations. If we keep the numbers up, we will not face the same fate of the Free Bass Syllabus which was cancelled due to low numbers. I would like to thank Zeljko Bedic, Tanya Marx, Milica Krga and Lionel Reekie for their hard work in getting this one over the line. This syllabus draws heavily from standard course book work. This makes it easier for students to be examined on the songs they are currently playing without the need to learn many extra pieces just for the examination. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact me.

Look forward to seeing you all soon. Keep up the good work.

Benny

We've heard from many musicians who've regretted quitting playing, but not one who regretted sticking with it. Keep playing through the hard times, things will get better!!

The Amazing Race Australia...with accordion music!! by Yvonne Smith (Adelaide)

Last year the Bavarian Dance Group in Adelaide (which we are members of) was contacted by Channel 10 and The Hahndorf Inn to see whether we could come up with some ideas for "The Amazing Race Australia" for the iconic location of Hahndorf, Australia's oldest surviving German settlement.

We brainstormed a few ideas over lunch at the Hahndorf Inn with the location scout staff, and then demonstrated some slap-dancing. They liked a particular dance which was difficult - but not too difficult! - to learn, and the TV crew then recorded a sample video of the dance as well as the accordion music played by Paul.

A few days later came the go ahead - the show producers loved it! Then a date was booked in for filming a few weeks later.



On the day of filming we all arrived in our German / Bavarian costumes slightly nervous about becoming "TV Stars", but full of anticipation and excitement. It was a lot of fun to watch the behind the scenes work, the crew and contestants were very professional, friendly & helpful. Then we waited for the contestants to arrive and do the slap-dance challenge. While the contestants were learning the dance moves in a back room, Paul played the accordion for the final performances in the restaurant where contestants had to get the dance just right in order to move forward in the game and receive the next clue.



In between waiting for the next team, the Hahndorf Inn manager kept offering free beer to all the staff and crew, which made for a relaxing and fun afternoon! It was a long day for us but at the end we were rewarded with delicious German meat & sausage platters, just like the ones on the TV show.

If you'd like to see the fun we had, look for it on <u>10Play.com.au</u> catch up TV, look for Season 2 Episode 11 "Hahndorf Slap & Snag" !

Yvonne Smíth





Singalong Live with Accordions Alfresco

Accordions Alfresco performed their second live Facebook concert on Monday 15th March, which was a great success. Amelia Granturco prompted those watching to singalong with the well known tunes they played. If you missed it, log into 'Accordion Society of Australia' Facebook page to watch. Below are photos of the group preparing for their performance.





How I Practise what I Practise by Anthony Schulz

I have been meaning, for a while, to write a short article on practice and in particular how the recent shift in the way I, and so many of us, have viewed our relationship to

work or school and being at home which may have brought about a change in how we approach this important aspect of playing the accordion. My hope is that many of you, will find this article interesting, whether you are young and starting out on your musical journey with the piano accordion, or someone who has been playing for many years and has wondered if there is a formula or 'best' way to learn and practise the instrument.

For me, one of the gifts 2020 provided was the time to reflect on my sense of self and music and as a result immerse myself in a deep study of not only the art of playing the piano accordion but equally, the art of practice. To reflect on one's practice and to therefore home in on the ongoing development of a routine that is fluid and responsive to the ever-changing needs of a creative, professional musician is no small task. By reflection, I mean to question what it means to commit to an ongoing process of practice that addresses both my need to create a closer physical, technical and music understanding of the piano accordion but also to observe and learn from the daily act of returning to, and being faced with, myself. After all, at the end of the day, what am I left with if not the conduit for my creative expression and my ability to understand and connect with the source of that output, that conduit being me.

If you were a fly on the wall (I hope you're not!), I suspect my practice method would seem very similar to the vast majority of musicians. And, I'm sure that like many other musicians, it's what goes on under the practice bonnet that is deeply personal and ultimately that which defines the individual. I often tell my students that the only thing one learns from observing process through an artist's output is that the artist had a process. This individual process most likely has very little bearing on anyone else other than to serve as a

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reminder that we all need to constantly look to ourselves to monitor and develop new, interesting and engaging ways of stretching ourselves. The observation of another's output and implied process does not tell us anything about our own process other than that we need to have one. I first came across the notion of individualised process and practice in the book Art & Fear by David Bayles and Ted Orland.

Now more than ever, practice has become the way in which I most learn about myself. A daily meditation that is ever changing, reflective and provocative. For example, a couple of weeks ago, I practised for longer stretches of time immersed in a single piece, section, phrase or gesture for as long as I felt I needed. A complete turnaround from a month earlier when I moved from one element to another, limiting time spent with a focus on concentration and immediacy. Through all of this, I have come to the conclusion that, for me, the practice 'routine' must be fluid. Kind of like a routine in which the structure is always observed, re-evaluated, refined and implemented. Repeat!

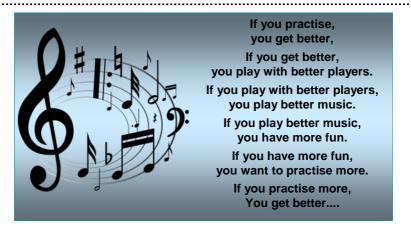
It is through the recognition and subversion of the banality of routine that I create the best opportunity for creative, fun, inspired and immersive practice. For those of you who are wondering how I explore, contain and monitor my practise. I will share some of my practice aids on the condition that you think about what works best for you.

- 1. I keep a paper practice diary that I write in every day
- I have two detailed routines that cover the bulk of the technical work I want to address. I keep these online so I can access them no matter where I am
- I practise a key area for three days before moving on to the next one (I work around the cycle of 5ths; major to relative minor. E.g. F major, D minor, Bb major, G minor, etc) - each key for three days
- 4. I start every practice session with an improvisation in the key of the day

- 5. I always have a manuscript book nearby in case any interesting compositional ideas come out of my improvisation. Alternatively, I may take a previous compositional idea and use it to start my improvisation for the day
- 6. I precede each practice session with a few yoga stretches to maintain awareness of my physical relationship to the accordion
- 7. I record and document important technical and repertoire dilemmas or realisations on a zoom video recorder (of course a phone is fine)
- 8. I practise in one-hour blocks with a 15/20 break in-between
- 9. Once I move on to repertoire (pieces) I usually focus on two or three pieces in a block and move between them and difficult areas quite regularly. My aim is to not become overly familiar (read complacent) and maintain a high level of focus by keeping myself actively engaged.

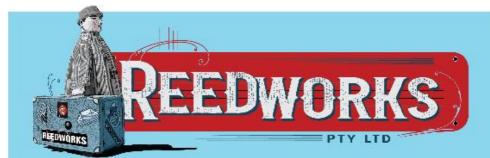
Finally, I can't emphasise enough just how important it is to remember why you play music and in particular, the accordion. It's often hard, time consuming and sometimes frustrating but ultimately, we play music because it is rewarding, fun and has the ability to bring people, audience and listener alike, great joy. I wish you all the best in your practice and musical endeavours.

Anthony



SNIPPETS, GOSSIP & NEWS





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Accordionists Out and About



NEVER TOO OLD

Maria Worthington and Glenny Grunfelder, "The Two Fillies", played at the Bikram Yoga Studio Darlinghurst, to a party of yoga enthusiasts recently! We think they were full of admiration at their fitness! (and playing!)

ST PATRICKS DAY

These two lovely Leprechauns (Maria & Glenny) entertained at two retirement/nursing homes on St Patricks Day, March 17th.





ROSS LIVENS UP BONDI BEACH

What to do when Covid strikes and there are no gigs?

Well Ross Maio decided he would shoot a promotional video at the infamous Bondi Beach! What a great location!

Ross played his wonderful rendition of Tico Tico which many may have listened to recently via his Facebook page. If you missed it or would like to hear it again then checkout 'Ross Maio Accordionist' Facebook page Tico Tico @ Bondi Beach.Sydney.Australia

and it is also featured on his album *Ross Maio - Mondo Accordion by request...* which is available at:<u>https://www.squeezerecordsaustralia.com/product-page/mondo-</u> <u>accordion-by-request</u> WEBSITE: http://www.squeezerecordsaustralia.com

The Maclagan Squeezebox Festival -Australia's only accordion festival.

Yippee! It's on again! Saturday October 9th—10th.

If you play a free reed instrument such as the button accordion, piano accordion, harmonica, concertina, bandoneon or harmonium, then make your way to Maclagan in October and showcase your talents with us.



What started as a fund-raising activity in 2003 to keep the local community hall going, the accordion festival at Maclagan has morphed into a much-loved and highly successful festival entering its 19th year of accordion playing in 2021.

The tiny rural township of Maclagan, 80 km north-west of Toowoomba in Queensland, attempts to rekindle the old time song and dance traditions each year for the public and aims to keep some of these accordion traditions alive.

On Saturday Oct 9th accordion players from 'all over' come to perform and there are visitors in the audience from every state in Australia. On Saturday evening experienced accordion players will take the stage to provide the dance music, and all other instruments will join in to provide variety, artistic colour and instrumental combination for the accordionists on stage.

Players, visitors and spectators can find out more about this festival on Facebook and on the web at <u>www.maclagansqueezeboxfestival.org</u>

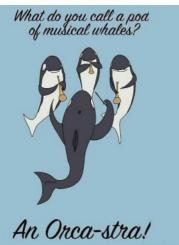
Help us 'keep the traditions alive' by joining us in October 2021.





Time for a laugh





I was wondering why music was coming from my printer. Apparently the paper was jamming.





The accordion gets its due

Four time Grammy nominee LynnMarie & The Boxhounds, make the accordion Sexy, Fun and Hip for a whole new generation!

The accordion is not a punchline.

It often seems that way, particularly in the post

-rock-and-roll era. Those old enough to remember the rise of Elvis will also remember the anti-Elvis, accordionist Myron (The Happy Norwegian) Floren, who could be seen weekly on television pumping out yet another chorus of *Lady of Spain*. Younger folk are more likely to associate the instrument with Weird Al Yankovic, a musical parodist whose first success was a squeezebox send-up

It's not as if the instrument is universally scorned. Accordion plays a lead role in Norteno and Tex-Mex music, where soloists such as Flaco Jimenez and the late Esteban (Steve) Jordan were stars, and also in Louisiana zydeco music, which was essentially invented by accordionist Clifton Chenier.

In Argentina, the voice of the tango is the bandoneon, a German cousin to the accordion; in France, Edith Piaf's performance of *L'Accordeoniste* speaks volumes about the instrument's appeal. The accordion or its brethren, the melodeon and concertina, can be found in Irish ceili bands, Colombia cumbia, South African *boeremusiek*, in gypsy music, in Brazilian *forro*, in jazz and pop groups, and of course in polka bands. You can even hear it at the opera, should you ever attend a production of Berg's *Wozzeck*.

So how did it get such a bad reputation?

"It's got a bad rap because it wasn't part of the establishment canon," says Pauline Oliveros, 78, a composer and accordionist who teaches at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y. A major figure in electronic and improvisational music for the last half-century, Oliveros will be performing at Ontario's Guelph Jazz Festival on Sept. 8.

"The accordion was invented in 1840, and this is after the classical period, the baroque period, and so on," she says. "It was designed to be played as a portable instrument, so that took it out to the working people's neighbourhoods. So it has a class prejudice against it."

In that sense, the accordion is in much the same boat as the harmonica. "The harmonica is really a remarkable instrument," she says. "It's directly in contact with the mouth of the player, and the player can make all sorts of expressive gestures with the mouth instantaneously. It's quite extraordinary."

In the 1920s and thirties, the harmonica was taken quite seriously in classical circles. Ralph Vaughan Williams and Malcolm Arnold wrote orchestral pieces for it, and

George Gershwin insisted that Larry Adler's harmonica version of *Rhapsody in Blue* was better than the original. But by the 1960s, it was largely dismissed as a folk instrument, best suited for blues and rock music.

Although the accordion followed a similar arc of popularity, Oliveros - who has been playing the instrument since she was 9 - didn't abandon it, even as her own interests turned to electronic music. For one thing, she was lucky enough to have studied under Willard Palmer, a Bach scholar and virtuoso who was equally at home on piano, organ and accordion. Palmer, who helped develop the "free bass" accordion, was one of the first to emphasize the instrument's potential for music outside the folk ghetto.

One of the accordion's strengths was that it is a more expressive keyboard than the piano or organ. Thanks to the bellows, it's easy for an accordionist to make rapid, dramatic or subtle changes in volume, giving the instrument the dynamic range of a wind instrument.

"One of the most neglected things in music education is dynamics and tonal quality," says Oliveros. "There's a concentration on pitch and rhythm, but without the expressive aspects."

That expressive element also plays a large part in the music of another musician coming to the Guelph festival, bandoneon player Dino Saluzzi. Like Astor Piazolla, the bandoneon genius who towers over Argentine music like a tango Beethoven, Saluzzi relies as much on composed passages as on improvisation. But Saluzzi's tone, phrasing and sense of instrumental colour make his music feel deeply personal, as if the bandoneon reflected some inner voice. It's as if he breathes with his bellows.

For Oliveros, the expressive power of the accordion led, quite unexpectedly, into electronic music.

At first, she was simply interested in the instrument's sonic potential, it's ability to do something beyond playing the notes on the page. "Willard Palmer taught me to listen for difference tones on the accordion," she says, referring to a sound on the far edges of accordion technique. Difference tones are a sort of sonic illusion that occurs when two notes vibrate together in such a way as to make the listener hear a third, related note.

"I knew that if you played an interval [on accordion] and pulled hard enough, in the high register you'd hear a difference tone," she explains. By chance, she discovered that, by tweaking the dials on early synthesizers in the 1960s, she could get the same effect from high-frequency oscillators.

"That's how I invented my system," she says, referring to the Expanded Instrument System which allows her to expand, alter and augment the sounds of her accordion until it takes on an almost orchestral depth and range. "Those ideas I have developed continuously since then into very complex systems." These days, Oliveros has gone beyond altering the sound of an acoustic accordion. Instead, she uses a Roland V-Accordion, which has the same keyboard, bellows, and buttons as her old instrument, but draws on a huge arsenal of digital sounds.

"It looks and feels like an accordion, but it's a wolf in sheep's clothing," she says, laughing.

Six takes on the one-man band

The accordion comes in all kinds of iterations, including these half-dozen most-common ones.

As ubiquitous as the accordion may seem, it actually exists in many different varieties. Here are the six principal types:

PIANO ACCORDION This is the accordion you've seen Weird Al Yankovic, Arcade Fire's Régine Chassagne, and countless polka stars play. It has a piano-style keyboard on the right side, and small, kernel-sized buttons on the left. The most common type uses what are known as stradella bass chord buttons, to flesh out the right-hand melody with harmony and bass. The "free bass" accordion replaces those chord buttons with ones that play individual notes.

CONTINENTAL CHROMATIC ACCORDION If you've ever seen accordion buskers in France or Italy, this is likely what they played. It's big, like the piano accordion, but instead of a piano-style keyboard, there are six rows of large, quarter-sized black and white buttons. The French jazz accordionist Richard Galliano plays this type.

MELODEON These are small accordions with two or four rows of buttons in place of a keyboard, and are often used in folk music. Flaco Jimenez plays one, as do countless Irish, Cajun and Scandinavian folk musicians. Melodeons come in two types. Diatonic melodeons have fewer buttons, and are limited to specific keys, like a standard harmonica. Chromatic melodeons play all 12 tones of the octave, just like a piano.

CONCERTINA A small accordion with hexagonal ends, instead of a perpendicular keyboard like a piano accordion or melodeon, its buttons are flush with the end pieces. Although it typically has a smaller range than other accordions, it's popular in English, Irish and Boer folk music.

BANDOLEON This is a German variant on the concertina, with square or rectangular ends instead of hexagonal. It is primarily known these days for its role in Argentine tango music.

ROLAND V-ACCORDION This is a modern, digital instrument that uses an accordion interface. Instead of reeds, the bellows activate accelerometers, which shade the way the digitally modelled sounds are heard.

Source: Special to The Globe and Mail Published September2010. Some information may no longer be current.

Matt the Accordion Repairer

By Glenny Grunfelder

I've had business with Matt Denton over the last year or two and last week I went out to collect an accordion he was working on for me. I asked him if I could take a photo and interview him for the Review and he agreed. Following is from this interview:-



Matthew Denton is an accordion repairer and seller of new and second-hand accordions. Matt says "I have the biggest selection of spare parts for accordions outside of Italy and have the ability to tackle any accordion problems no matter how complicated. "I handle midi and microphone installations and stock various accessories such as shoulder straps, left hand straps, bellow straps, back pads/cushions, etc.".

Matt is now based in Campbelltown, Sydney (having recently moved his whole business (a major feat!) from Ingleburn .

I met Matt when I bought a "ladies' accordion" from him a couple of years ago, a Farfisa accordion . I was thrilled with this accordion because he had worked on the reeds to increase the bass and musette sounds. (I needed a smaller accordion because I'd had a back operation which meant I couldn't play my Air 11 Scandalli while I was recuperating!)

Matt's father, John Denton, was a seller and repairer of accordions, bandoneons and Melodicas (a small keyboard which you could blow through a tube to make the reeds sound). He worked behind a shopfront in Burwood from 1956.

When Matt was 11 years old he used to rush after school every day to his dad's workshop to help him with repairs and maintenance, learning his craft from his father. Although Matt wanted to leave school as soon as he could, his father insisted that he finish school and go to university. They worked together from 1962. Later on Matt went off to see the world and worked in the USA as a repairer and on his return to Sydney, took over his father's business.

Those of us who have had dealings with Matt can only admire his dedication and extensive knowledge about his craft - over half a century of experience! I've learned so much from him about the inner workings of accordions! Matt welcomes any enquiries and is generous with his time and advice. Matts contact details are included in the 'Repairers & Retailers Directory' on page 27.

NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND ACCORDION ASSOCIATION



INTERNATIONAL ACCORDION PROJECT

Contributed by Alison Worthington

https://youtube/Asuer5hCmo8

On December 22, "The Challenge of Time", Global Accordion Project Orchestra (GAPO), 85 accordionists from all over the world premiered on the <u>London</u> <u>Accordion Orchestra</u> Facebook & youtube. This was the last piece for 2020 written by Ian Watson and commissioned by members of the orchestra.

I reached out to a few members of the GAPO orchestra to get their thoughts on being involved in this global project.

"In these difficult moments in which only "social distancing" is heard, it has been a real pleasure to be able to make music surrounded by people who I do not know in person but who I know very well that our love for the accordion unites us. Undeniable the extraordinary work of Ian and Sam, always so close and attentive. I have participated in the 2 GAPO projects and I will continue participating in whatever they continue to prepare. Of course, as soon as all this happens, I can't find a better way to finish the project than playing all together in person." Jasone Camara Telleria - Zumarraga, Spain (participated twice).

"I find the playing in the GAPO very interesting. I could concentrate on the melodies of my part and lay all the music into it. It works the senses. It is a special wonderful feeling to play with so many accordionists together, around the world. So we all stand together in this time and give ourselves an outstanding beautiful thing – music! The idea from Ian and Sam is so old and so good. In former times, the composers earned money from the dukes or kings, they were employed. Today, the composers go back to the roots and use the infinite possibilities of the net. Norbert Schneider - Essen, Germany (participated in all recordings)

"With each piece, this virtual accordion orchestra seems to be evolving and improving. It's so much fun to be part of these projects along with other accordionists from around the world!" <u>Jane Christison</u> - Kansas, United States.

(participated in all recordings).

"I had the chance to join GAPO. What a brilliant project! I like trying out new ways, so this was a great opportunity. Even more, as I saw that Ian Watson is the composer - I have seen him conducting the LAO at the festival in Austria and I definitely wanted to join this orchestra as bass player. The biggest challenge was actually, to take a reasonable video. "The challenge of Times" is very well reflecting the situation we have all been through recently. The ups and downs, the different moods." Marjeta Neftenbach, Switzerland.

"It was a real pleasure to participate in the GAPO project. With covid 19, rehearsals are forbidden, concerts are cancelled and The Challenge of Time was a good opportunity to come together around music. Thank you for that, it's so important during this terrible period." Jerome Ortet, the Ensemble d'accordeons de Falaise conductor.

"Being able to play with accordionists from around the world is brilliant – especially in a time when meeting with others is restricted. Feeling a connection with others, and uniting people is something that was much needed by all. How often do you get a chance to play with people in the USA or New Zealand? There was a bit of nostalgia for me too as I grew up playing in competitions with Ian Watson, so I was keen to support this project. He was always a phenomenal player and someone I aspired to play like. The pieces he has composed are just incredible – they are so atmospheric and intricate. I cant wait for the next one!" Victoria Molnar, UK.

Ian Watson has confirmed that this is the second piece in the 'Lockdown Trilogy' with the third piece to be written and recorded late March.

New Zealanders Alison Worthington, Kevin Friedrich, Grayson Masefield, Heather Masefield, and Lionel Reekie have taken part in this project.

The first in the trilogy was "Horizon" which premiered in August 2020. Detailed article at:

http://www.accordions.com/news.aspx?d=23-Oct-2020&lang=en&s=16959

GRAYSON MASEFIELD

On Saturday the 19th December Grayson Masefield was invited to perform by the retiring Head of Music at the University of Auckland School of Music Professor James Tibbles at a Ponsonby Church. At this Baroque concert he performed a duet with a fellow Doctoral student

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