

THE ACCORDION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC.

# ACCORDION REVIEW



J U N E 2 0 2 3

VOLUME 40 ISSUE 2

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*Cover Photo: NSW Orchestra 'Accordions Alfresco' at Showcase Concert, details page 11,12*

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Accordion  
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Australia

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## *Hello from the Editor*

Welcome to our June edition. A special welcome to our new ASA members in NSW and Victoria. It would be lovely to receive news and articles in the future about your accordion world!

This edition covers the recent AATA championship and the exciting Accordion Showcase Concert which was a collaboration between ASA and AATA. Many of us attended and took part. It was very enjoyable as you can see by our Cover page and photos on *pages 7 to 12*. Thanks to the hardworking team that put it all together.

If you would like to join an accordion group in an Australian state, contact the ASA and details will be passed on. Contact details for Sydney and Melbourne groups are included on *page 18*.

Ben and Anthony conducted a pre Concert workshop on Performance Anxiety, a topic of special interest to me as I often experience this! I listened intently to the tips and ideas shared. At my next performance I almost forgot there was an audience (not good), so a bit of fine tuning might be in order next time! Well done Ben and Anthony. ASA members will be treated to more workshops in the future, the next planned for Sept 30th in Melbourne, members will be advised when confirmed.

In the workshop, Anthony suggested physical exercises prior to performing to focus your mind and alleviate anxiety. As a follow up, I have included an article on 'Wellness for Accordionists' on *pages 16, 17* which will prepare you and your body before playing the accordion.

**Renewal and New Membership**—a new ASA website now exists for new member applications and the Renewal of existing members. *Refer page 26 for details.*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Yours musically,

*Cheryle Mills*



## *Presidents Report*

Hello and welcome to winter. Here at the Accordion Society, we do not slow down in these winter months. We have many upcoming activities and events that we would love you to be involved in. No matter what the weather we will never stop working hard.

Recently I was fortunate enough to travel to the NZAA (New Zealand Accordion Association) competitions which are held annually on the first weekend in June. I

travel across the Tasman every year to take part in these competitions. This year the accordion society provided financial support for one of our members Finlay Macdermid. Finlay has represented us before, we were very happy to have him represent us again. He is a talented player; we look forward to his next challenge, well done Finlay

If you would like to see the results of the competition you can find them online at

<http://www.accordion.com/accordion/2023/03June.htm>.

You can also catch up and learn about accordion happenings all over the world at <http://www.accordion.com>. Accordions.com or Accordions Worldwide gather news from all over the world about everything accordion. They do a great job, we are lucky to have such an amazing news crew working for all Accordionists. Please also check out their huge array of sheet music available for purchase.

If you thought the weekend couldn't get any more exciting, you are wrong. Tania Marx from the AATA also brought over a contingent of students from Sydney to join the New Zealand competitions in Auckland. They played very well, we look forward to seeing them compete in future competition and events all over the world. A huge thanks goes out to the teachers and the parents of all the competitors who put so much time and effort into helping us organise and deliver these events.

Now you may wonder what has been going on in Australia. As you may have seen we held a huge showcase concert on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May. The ASA



joined the AATA in our first combined event. The AATA held their first face to face competition since covid in the morning. After lunch, Anthony Schulz and myself held a workshop on Performance Anxiety and ways to overcome it followed by our huge Showcase Concert. We were joined by Funkordion, The Jaga Band and Accordions Alfresco that included our Vice President Anthony Schulz and our past president Elizabeth Jones. Thank you for joining the fun, I really appreciated it. We also had solo performances from the Sydney and Melbourne championship winners . With an audience of over 200 people, it was a resounding success. This was our first big event in many years. A big thank you to Club Five Dock for providing us with the room and an even bigger thanks to Glennie Grunfelder for all your hard work in acquiring the room and everything you do for the Accordion Society of Australia.

If you are looking for your next fix of accordion in Australia then you do not need to look far or wait too long. Our Victorian Division has a big day planned for Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September. With a Masterclass, workshop, combined accordion orchestra and concert, I'm sure you will not be disappointed. I advise you to stay tuned to our Facebook regarding exact times and activities. We will also send out email alerts as we get closer to the event.

Thank you all and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Keep on accordioneing

*Benny Pattinson*



### *ASA Membership 2023/2024*

July/ August is the time to renew your annual Membership for **2023/2024**. Would you like to become Member? It is so easy now via our new

**ASA website.**[www.accordionsaustralia.com](http://www.accordionsaustralia.com)

and **Direct debit/Bank transfer**

Go to Page 26 for details. Thank you for your support.

## *A Wonderful Accordion Weekend*

The weekend of May 28th experienced accordionists from Sydney and Melbourne coming together for the annual AATA Championship and Accordion Showcase Concert at Five Dock RSL club with the ASA and AATA working together.

The weekend encompassed:

- **ASA Discussion Group**
- **AATA Championship**
- **Performance Anxiety Workshop**
- **Accordion Showcase Concert**

A summary of each of the above points are detailed in this article:



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### *ASA Discussion Group*

On Saturday 27th the ASA held a discussion group conducted by Ben Pattinson and Anthony Schulz at the Croydon Park Club to discuss new ideas to showcase and promote the accordion and assist ASA members. Professional accordionists Paolo Campanari-Brancondi and Stefan Sernek came along to contribute their ideas.

Anthony Schulz,  
Paolo Campanari-Brancondi, Ben Pattinson

Sandra Mackay, Maria Worthington,  
Stefan Sernek, Glenny Grunfelder



## *AATA Annual Championship*

*by Tania Marx*

The Australian Accordion Teachers Association (AATA) held its annual championship in Sydney on May 28<sup>th</sup>. This year's event marked the return of face to face competition following the pandemic, so for many of the younger contestants, it was their first opportunity to compete in a major contest. This year the event was held at the Club Five Dock RSL.

Each year this competition places special importance on giving young accordionists valuable competition experience. The youngest contestants were only 6 years of age, but there was a total of 21 different categories providing a variety of musical genres for all ages, from classical to ethnic, jazz to entertainment music and even duet classes. The Jury featured some of Australia's most respected accordionists and their positive encouragement towards all of the participants created a really supportive atmosphere.



The AATA joined forces with the Accordion Society of Australia (ASA) in a combined gala concert showcasing the tremendous versatility of our instrument with wonderful solo and ensemble performances to a large and very enthusiastic audience.

The AATA is the Australian representative organisation for the Confederation Internationale Des Accordionistes. International performers and competitors are warmly invited to attend next year's 2024 Australian International Accordion Championships.

Any enquiries can be forwarded to AATA president, Tania Marx at [tats64@gmail.com](mailto:tats64@gmail.com)





Competitors waiting to perform

Judging panel L-R:  
Marina Jin  
Nikolai Shcherbakov  
Iryna Stepko  
Richard She  
Anthony Schulz



### *Performance Anxiety Workshop*

The ASA's Ben Pattinson and Anthony Schulz conducted a one hour workshop on 'Performance Anxiety' (*this may have been of benefit to several young accordionist that competed in the morning championships*).

Anxiety should not be a prerequisite of performing. The audience are there because they appreciate music and not to criticise the musicians. Stay focused on you and your music and enjoy it. Anthony demonstrated some physical exercises to help redirect your mind prior to a performance.

Thank you Ben and Anthony and we look forward to many more workshops.

## ACCORDION SHOWCASE CONCERT

### *Funkordion*

Opening the “Accordion Showcase” on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> May at Club Five Dock RSL, was our Funkordion group of young accordionists (ranging in age from six to twenty and supported by some adults) played in the concert. They were prepared by the founder of the group, Tania Marx, President of the Australian Accordion Teachers Association and led by Ben Pattinson, President of the Accordion Association of Australia.

In this great venue, the hall was packed with at least two hundred accordion enthusiasts who thoroughly enjoyed the skills of these young people. Their repertoire included orchestral pieces and some popular music.



## *Jaga Band*

The wonderful Jaga Band were next to perform at the Showcase Concert with their authentic Eastern European music and instruments. Despite only three of the band members being present, the music and singing was superb.

Several audience members were fascinated with the instrument called a **Cimbalom\*** and wonder if any youngsters were interested in learning this unusual instrument. (*Page 20 features a recent concert by the Jaga Band .*)

*\* Cimbalom is a stringed instrument of the dulcimer family used in small music ensembles within central-eastern Europe, particularly Hungary. It has a chromatic range of 4 octaves and pedal mechanism for damping the strings.*



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## *Accordions Alfresco*

*by Sandra Mackay*

Accordions Alfresco also performed at the Showcase Concert and it was their first concert of the year. We followed performances by Funkordion, Jaga Band and also some great solo players.

We invited some old friends to join us on stage and were delighted to not only have Amelia Granturco back but also to have Cheryle Mills and Anthony Schulz in town from Victoria. Our other guest player was Elizabeth Jones, who picked up an accordion and played with us for the first time in a very long while!

The performance was also the first for our newest Accordions Alfresco member, Tom Miskovich, who has done a great job getting up to speed with repertoire in a short time.

We all enjoyed playing some tunes to a great audience and are looking forward to more performances throughout the year.

Lots of hard work went into the event from all the musicians but also the organisers, so a big thank you to all involved.



# KIDS CORNER



## *Denise feels the fun in Music!*

I'm so glad to have this opportunity to introduce myself.

My name is Denise and I am a happy and outgoing 8 year old girl.

My favourite extracurricular activity is gymnastics. I am a professional gymnast.

When I was 5 years old, I met my accordion teacher by chance and started my accordion learning career.

To be honest, I hated practising accordion at first, because I found it boring and hard!

As I continue to learn and improve I am proud of myself to be in an accordion group with others. I feel the fun of music. I like playing the accordion more and more because I can show my accordion skills at anytime, anywhere.

Also, I was very happy to get a good result in the AATA Competition last Sunday. I am honoured to have a special opportunity to play with so many musicians and accordion lovers and enjoy the fun of music.

I enjoy it very much





## World Accordion Day!

*World Accordion day was celebrated across the Globe and in Australia some Victorian accordionists took part and have sent in photos and details of how they promoted their beloved accordion on the day.*

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### *ASA Victoria—Melbourne*

*by Anthony Schulz*

If audience attendance is a measure of success, then the ASA's first World Accordion Day excelled. With over 70 audience in attendance, Melbourne's iconic venue Open Studio was well and truly at capacity, filled with accordion enthusiasts, lovers and performers young and not so young.

The newly formed ASA Orchestra Victoria (ASAVO) as well as the Prahran Accordion Band, played alongside French Musette and Chanson ensemble Langue de Chat as well as accordion (and mixed instrument) duos and soloists. There were performances by students who are currently preparing to go to Sydney in July to compete in the Australian National Championships as well as some of Melbourne's best known accordionists including Dave Evans, and Sofia Chapman who dropped by to join the celebration.

The sense of warmth and collegiality throughout the afternoon was terrific and the event has further propelled the ASA into the limelight as the premier organisation promoting all things to do with the accordion here in Australia.

Congratulations to all the wonderful players who joined us on World Accordion Day, 2023. *(Photos below and on the next page).*



*Anthony with the new Musette ensemble 'Langue de Chat'*



*Palmi Snorrenson and Jeannette Benzing*



*Silvana Mandile*



*Dave Evans*

## *World Croquet Day and World Accordion Day coincide*

*by Cheryle Mills*

In Mallacoota World Accordion Day was celebrated at two different venues. When it was realised that **World Croquet Day** was also on May 6th, a morning tea was organised at my Croquet club. When mentioned “*it is also World Accordion Day*”, I was encouraged to bring along my accordion and celebrate with a couple of tunes after the game. Later that day, our band ‘Farout’ were performing, so I was able to promote and celebrate World Accordion Day twice!



## WELLNESS FOR ACCORDIONISTS

*Playing the accordion is a full-body experience and your mental and physical wellness are equally important. Here are some tips in caring for your wellness.*



### *Keeping Your Mind Healthy*

- Set goals for what you want to accomplish in a session
  - Make them realistic
  - Keep an ongoing progress log
- Prioritise practice efficiency over practice time
  - Practice small chunks of music at a time
  - Utilise run-throughs of pieces as mental rewards and closure at the end of practice sessions
- Listen to music
  - Both music you enjoy AND music you've never heard before
  - The song you want to played by non-accordionists
- Expand your overall musicianship
  - Play with other musicians!
  - Friends, family, community music ensembles, etc.
  - Play along with online recordings and/or backing tracks
- Think of why you play the accordion in the first place
  - If you're not enjoying it, what are the reasons why?  
Is it physical pain, stress, mental fatigue, boredom, etc.
- When you get sick of playing the accordion:
  - Take a (time limited) break
  - Play what you enjoy playing
  - Find a way to play / cover a song you enjoy but maybe you don't have the music
  - Muck around
- Explore the random noises your instrument can make
  - Find a way to make it fun / a game



## *Keep your Body healthy*

- Use correct posture
  - The position of your accordion impacts your body. If incorrect it can lead to tension and pain

### **Factors to consider when checking your posture:**

- Straps too tight or too loose
- Neck position when looking at keys on the right hand
- Left hand strap
  - Too tight and you cannot move your hand freely
  - Too loose will make it harder to control the bellows
- Chair position
- Holding the instrument should not be causing you pain
- Breathe into your playing
  - Think of yourself as a wind instrumentalist

## *Prepare your body with a proper warm-up*

- Wake up your body and get your blood flowing at the beginning of each practice session, rehearsal, performance, etc.
- Shake out wrists and Finger Flicks
- Forearm stretches
- Arms across body
- 3 big breaths
- Arm over head lateral stretch
- Arm above head, grab wrist stretch
- Twists / loosen up
- Head tilt neck stretch
- Neck rolls
- Seated spine twists
- Childs' pose



**YOUR BODY AND MIND SHOULD NOW BE IN A HEALTHIER STATE**

*Extract from doc by Rachel Quirbach, MTI July 2018*

*Would you like to play along with  
other accordionists?  
Join an Accordion Group (listed below).  
Please come along—Everyone is welcome.*



## **ASA VICTORIA ORCHESTRA**

The new ASA Victoria Orchestra commenced on Saturday 18th of March at the Fairfield campus of Melbourne Polytechnic. Rehearsals are fortnightly at 3.00pm for 1.5 hours with a \$10.00 session fee per person payable on the day. The session fee includes room-booking, photocopying, arranging, and composition for the ensemble (and insurance).

Please note that the ensemble is inclusive of all experience levels, age, gender and musical tastes. If you are interested please contact

Anthony: [anthonyjschulz@gmail.com](mailto:anthonyjschulz@gmail.com)

## **ASA NSW ORCHESTRA—ACCORDIONS ALFRESCO**

Sydney based Accordion orchestra 'Accordions Alfresco' meet in Sydney on **Monday nights 7pm - 9pm** at Russell Lea School hall, Russell Lea.

Note: *The last Monday of the month is conducted over ZOOM (everyone welcome)*. Anyone interested in coming along, please contact

Ben: [ben.h.pattinson@gmail.com](mailto:ben.h.pattinson@gmail.com)

## **PRAHRAN ACCORDION BAND—Victoria**

The Prahran Accordion Band meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month and beginners' band on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at the German Club Tivoli in Windsor, 7-9pm. So whatever your performance level from beginner to intermediate come and join in.

Members will have to join the Tivoli club eventually at a very reasonable rate. Further details email Judy :[judygunson58@gmail.com](mailto:judygunson58@gmail.com)



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*What's On*

### **ZYDECO JUMP**

**Sunday July 23rd 2pm—5pm**  
**Newport Bowls Club,**  
**4 Market St, Newport VIC**

Led by accordionist George Butrumlis, the line up will include Paul Neuendorf on guitar and vocals, Gary Samolin on drums, Ben Taylor on washboard, Mark Ferrie on bass and special guest the wonderful Justin Brady on harmonica, mandolin and fiddle and we're very happy to announce that our original sax player, Toots Wostry, will also be appearing with us on alto sax.



### **ASA VICTORIA ACCORDION FESTIVAL**

**Saturday 30th September**

An Accordion Festival is being planned by ASA Victoria for Saturday 30th September. Details are yet to be confirmed and Anthony Schulz will advise members when more details are available.

## JAGA Band Fundraising concert for Ukraine

by Glenny Grunfelder

On Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, I attended a concert by Jaga Band in the Django Bar at the Camelot Lounge, Sydney. I brought along my sister who was visiting from New Zealand to experience these five incredibly talented ladies who take you on a musical journey to the land of Cossacks of the past...and heroes of the present. They brought to life traditional songs of love, loss, heroism, hope, light and celebration of life.



Mar'yana Sywak, multi-instrumentalist, singer and leader of Jaga Band wrote:-

*“The purpose of this show is to raise the awareness of Australian society about the full-scale war that has escalated in Ukraine, where millions of people are now facing a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.*

*Since the very first days of this brutal war, Jaga Band has been tirelessly raising funds for the Ukrainian people in need of urgent assistance. In fact, out of our 18 performances in 2022, every single one was a benefit concert for Ukraine.”*

It was a wonderful evening – great music, dining and socialising with the supporters of this group of dedicated musicians.

*NEWS FROM  
NEW ZEALAND  
ACCORDION ASSOCIATION*



**Tracey Collins with NZ String Quartet**

On Friday the 31<sup>st</sup> March Tracey Collins joined violinist Marion Burns in concert with the NZ String Quartet at the Unitarian Church, Ponsonby. Irish composer Dave Flynn premiered some new works for the Irish Airs and Graces Concert. The mixture of classical musicians playing Irish melodies with accordion was much appreciated by the audience, a fun collaboration.



**James Crabb: Performance of “Dragspil” – Auckland**

By Heather Masefield

When New Zealand composer Lyell Cresswell died last year, the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra decided to perform one of his works. They chose “Dragspil” (the word loosely means accordion in Nordic countries), a concerto for accordion and orchestra.

This was first premiered by accordionist James Crabb in 1995 at the BBC Proms and only performed one other time. Scotsman James Crabb was now found to be living in Sydney, Australia and was agreeable to perform. He had studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen and was a teacher there for some years.

The APO ask soloists to give a talk prior to the concert and this took place in the concert chamber, where many concert goers were introduced to how the accordion works and about the composition "Dragspil" commissioned for Crabb.

Many accordionists attended the well-advertised concert and afterwards had the opportunity to meet him.

The performance in the Auckland Town Hall was extremely well received despite the raging storm outside putting off some ticket holders.

Read the professional review (below) by the New Zealand Herald titled "Thrills aplenty in energetic concert"

Soloist who premiered work adds to magic of NZ composer's piece

**A**uckland Philharmonia Orchestra's Dragspil concert opened with *The Bard*, a lesser-known Sibelius symphonic poem. Subtler and less robust than the composer's *Finlandia*, conductor Luke Dolman created a mellifluous weave of harp and whispering strings, with a passing eruption of Nordic fire.

The late Lylell Cresswell, one of our major composers, relocated to the northern hemisphere in the 1960s to live and work in Scotland. His accordion concerto *Dragspil* was premiered by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and soloist James Crabb at the 1995 BBC Proms.

On Thursday, the charismatic Crabb was here to help unleash the same visceral thrills Proms punters must have experienced in London 28 years ago.



James Crabb

*Dragspil* positively roars with energy as Cresswell dispenses the bold slanting colours of his idiosyncratic soundworld.

The first movement set off mysteriously, but soon Crabb's snaking chromatics sparked dance-like exhilaration, with conductor and orchestra in impressive synchronisation. A moment's silence and the harp transported us into a magical soundgarden, soon after, staunch strings tumbled in Crabb,

# Thrills aplenty in energetic concert



Luke Dolman conducted Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra's Dragspil concert.  
Photo / Supplied

**Review**

- **What:** Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra
- **Where:** Auckland Town Hall
- **When:** Thursday
- **Reviewer:** William Dart

stealthily doubling on clarinet. *Dragspil's* often outrageously dissonant finale made for an adrenalin-pumping, triple forte close. Even the magnificent central movement, an eerie lament instigated by cello quartet, was soon wrested into more boisterous territory. Crabb's encore was a

breath-takingly simple and poignant Shetland folk tune.

After the interval, the orchestra explored the late-romantic twilight of Elgar's *First Symphony*. Here, the noble spirit was restrained, and Dolman made much of the woodland spires in the second movement.

How might the redoubtable Elgar, who did owe a recasting of *The Rite of Spring*, have found Cresswell's piece, I wondered. Remembering that Elgar once described this symphony as containing all the phases of pride, despair, anger and peace, he may well have heard a similar range of emotions in *Dragspil*.

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## **ADVERTISING IN THE ACCORDION REVIEW**

If you would like to place an advertisement in this review, please email the advertisement with full details and photo/s to the Editor:

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Email: [cherylemills66@gmail.com](mailto:cherylemills66@gmail.com)  
PO Box 442, Mallacoota VIC 3892  
Mob. 0414 915154

### ADVERTISING RATES.

Full Page	\$50.00
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### Bank Transfer:

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**Cheque:** payable to **Accordion Society of Australia Inc.** and mailed to

Treasurer/Secretary  
51 Bogalara Road,  
OLD TOONGABBIE  
NSW 2146  
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Accordion  
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## NEW MEMBERSHIP / ANNUAL RENEWAL

ACCORDION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA  
(Incorporated NSW under the Associations  
Incorporation Act 1984)

ASA Annual Membership is August to July. Renewal time is 1<sup>st</sup> August each year ;

General Member	\$ 40.00
Teacher Member	\$ 50.00
Family Member	\$ 55.00

**New Membership AND Renewals** can now be done using the ASA streamlined online system. Please log into:

**ASA website.** [www.accordionsaustralia.com](http://www.accordionsaustralia.com)

*Payment is via Bank Transfer. Note that Victorian members have a different Account to the other states, as indicated below.*

### Bank Transfer Details

#### **Victorian Members only,**

Account Name: **Accordion Society of Australia Inc.**  
 BSB: **063 220**  
 Account Number: **00900899**  
 Transfer Description: ***your name and description***

**\*\* Please email a payment advice to [jeannette.benzing@gmail.com](mailto:jeannette.benzing@gmail.com)**

#### **NSW and other States (except Victoria)**

Account Name: **Accordion Society of Australia Inc.**  
 BSB: **062 349**  
 Account Number: **10030067**  
 Transfer Description: ***your name and description***

**\*\* Please email a payment advice to [granvs@bigpond.com](mailto:granvs@bigpond.com)**

### **Manual Membership and renewals. Remove and return to NSW or Vic.**

I,.....Phone:.....  
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Address ,.....

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# *Repairers & Retailers Directory*



## **SYDNEY – NSW**

### **Accordion Repairs Australia (Sydney)**

Mobile: 0418 217 669

Email: [accordionrepairs.aus@gmail.com](mailto:accordionrepairs.aus@gmail.com)

Website: [accordionrepairsaustralia.com](http://accordionrepairsaustralia.com)

### **REEDWORKS—Tony Peri Accordion Tuning & Repairs, Sydney, Australia**

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Email: [info@reedworks.com.au](mailto:info@reedworks.com.au)

Website: [www.reedworks.com.au](http://www.reedworks.com.au)

### **Matthew Denton**

Accordion Repairs, New, Used Accordions, refurbishments, midi and microphone installations, Cases, Straps, Parts and more Campbelltown (PO Box 898, Ingleburn NSW 1890)

Mobile: 0434 404 741

Email: [notned58@gmail.com](mailto:notned58@gmail.com)

## **VICTORIA**

### **Guy Bellman**

The Accordion Workshop

[www.theaccordionworkshop.com](http://www.theaccordionworkshop.com)

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Wattle Park Vic 3128

Mobile: 0418 141 392

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