

THE OKLAHOMA SQUEEZINS

"Our squeezein'...is pleasin'"

The Oklahoma Accordion Club Newsletter

MusicFest Vancouver: TOEAC squeezes cool new life out the accordion



Pieternel Berkers (left) and Renée Bekkers turn accordion playing into performance art with their innovative duo TOEAC.

Blame it on Lawrence Welk. For years, the accordion has had to carry the burden of being terminally unhip, when in fact it's shockingly versatile. For one thing, it's just about the only keyboard instrument that breathes, giving it a much more vocal sound than the piano, organ, or synthesizer. And in its more complex manifestations, it can cover seven octaves or more, making it essentially an orchestra you can sling over your shoulder. Far from being stodgy, it's downright wonderful—and Dutch musicians Renée Bekkers and Pieternel Berkers figured that out at a

very young age.

"We both started with the recorder, because that's obligatory," reports Bekkers, speaking to the *Straight* from Amsterdam. "After two years you can choose another instrument, and there was a piano, a violin, a guitar, and accordions. We both liked the accordions most."

"When you play on the accordion, you just push one button, and there's this chord," she continues. "It feels quite fast that you're playing really full music."

Further proof of the accordion's charm is that

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August Meeting

The August meeting will be held on Sunday, August 14. As usual, the meeting will be held at the Messiah Lutheran Church, located at the intersection of NW Expressway and Portland Ave., just west of I-44 and Baptist Hospital, and across the street from Deaconess Hospital on Portland Ave. Everyone is encouraged to come, and everyone is encouraged to perform. If you are shy about playing alone, some of us will play with you.

Oklahoma Accordion Club Meeting Agenda for Sunday, August 14, 2011

2:00 pm	Orchestra Rehearsal
3:00 pm	Board Meeting
3:30 pm	General Membership Meeting



The Treasurer Sez

Evie Albreski

Dick and I just returned from our family reunion in Miami, Florida. We spent eight days with our kids and grandkids. Guess what? It was great! Enough about us.

Dick will be conducting two bands at the next March 2012 NAA meeting. He will continue the Youth Band, and introduce a new band that will be called the NAA Amateur Accordion Band. This will be designed for those players who would enjoy a more relaxed and fun opportunity to play in an ensemble. He will arrange his own music. In fact, he has one French tune almost completed. If you are planning to attend next year's meeting, and if you might consider this type of band, please let Dick know. Practices could start this fall for the Oklahoma folks.

Oklahoma has produced some very talented accordionists. One in particular is an Oklahoma City guy by the name of Robert Atwood. Robert currently resides in the San Antonio area and performs regularly with a German band called the Sauerkrauts. We just learned that Robert is having some health problems. If you have a moment, whisper a prayer on his behalf. I'm sure he still has a lot of talent to share.

Most all of us recently enjoyed the Primus Ikaalinen 2011 video that showed some amazing accordion players from all over the world. Our own Cory Pesaturo of Rhode Island was the final winner in this contest. What you may not know is that Cory was not allowed to properly ship his own accordion with him on the plane. Cory had to borrow another accordion at the competition. What a true champion. We all know how close we come to our own accordions. Remember, if you plan to fly and take your own accordion with you, you might have some serious problems. Cory just proved that fact.

We are still in the black, and there are some funds in the cookie jar. We have \$386.55 left for the remainder of this year.

Hope to see you all on or before August 14, at the Messiah Lutheran Church. Don't forget to bring your accordion.
Evie



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July Meeting

Lois Roth

Oklahoma Accordion Club Minutes July 10, 2011 Meeting

President Oliver Delaney called the meeting to order.

Fourteen members and four guests were present. Oliver welcomed everyone and each guest introduced himself or herself.

- The annual picnic will be held on October 15 or 16 at the Delaney home -- the exact date will be announced soon. This will take the place of the October 9 meeting.
- The meeting in Tulsa with the Tulsa group has been postponed indefinitely.
- Membership in the Oklahoma Accordion Club is at an all-time high.
- A big Thank You was given to all the accordion teachers from the club!
- Oliver reminded us that the club's library is a valuable resource, and that there will be a history theme meeting in the future.
- Karen West told about attending a performance by The Accordion Babes last month. She showed us



the photo calendar that the group sells.

- The music program was started by Renato playing "Pedan, Pedan" and "Fly Me To The Moon."
- Bob Mansfield and his student, Anthony Nagid, played "Blue Skirt Waltz."
- Anthony played an original composition called "Don't Need Electricity to Have Power."
- Then Bob played and sang his arrangement of "An Irish Blessing." He also performed "Harry's Boogie" and "Untitled #2" from *Suite for Accordion* by Beau Mansfield.
- Dick Albreski continued the music with "Gossip" by George Mendela and "Bye Bye Blues Boogie."
- The band finished with "Salute To Spring," "You're a Grand Old Flag," and "God Bless America."
- Bob distributed copies of "An Irish Blessing," and Oliver read the beautiful words to us.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 14, at 3:30 p m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Roth



TOEAC

Continued from front page

this early infatuation has only grown stronger with time. As TOEAC, Bekkers and Berkers are one of the world's leading accordion duos, and when they make their MusicFest Vancouver debut, they intend to show that their chosen instrument has limitless potential.

At the same time, however, they aim to entertain. This is somewhat unusual in such virtuosic performers, but the two musicians recognize that they're starting at a disadvantage.

"People think that the accordion is an old-fashioned instrument for old people, it's true," Bekkers admits. "But I think it's changing now—and we're trying to make that change. When we play concerts people are always surprised: 'Oh, I didn't know that you could do that!' So it's really nice that you can surprise people, and I think it's harder to surprise people with, for example, the piano."

The key to holding an audience's attention, Bekkers explains, is to choose music that tells a story. She cites Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which she and Berkers have arranged for their duo, as a piece that has a strong visual

component. Just as compelling, although much more modern, is the intricate and whimsical *View From a Dutch Train*, by their compatriot Jacob ter Veldhuis.

"People really like that music, and still it's kind of complicated to understand," she notes. "But it gets you from the beginning."

Ter Veldhuis's work has gotten such a strong reaction that TOEAC will also perform his *Body of Your Dreams*, a pointed look at dieting, complete with samples from American weight-loss commercials. Even further into the realm of performance art is Zbigniew Bargielski's *Conversation With a Shadow*, which is as much a piece of theatre as a musical composition. It's an area that Bekkers and Berkers are increasingly interested in exploring, up to a point.

"We're trying to do more of that—but not with everything, of course," says Bekkers, laughing. "That would be some kind of circus!"

• *Courtesy of Straight.com
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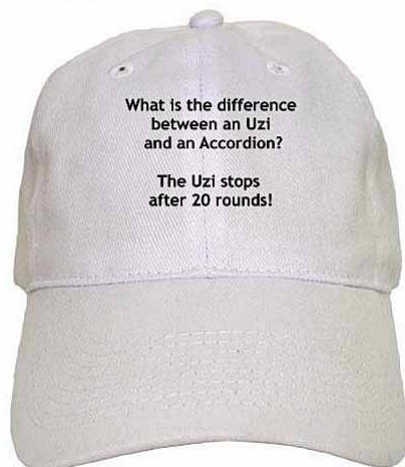
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