

Not Just Oom-PAH! Accordion Workshop and Concert June 16-17, 2018

Summary Report by Laura J. Niland

The Not Just Oom-PAH! Accordion Workshop and Concert was held on June 16-17, 2018 which was supported by a grant from the City of Austin, Cultural Arts Division and sponsored by Texas Folklife Resources. The project was written and coordinated by Shirley Johnson from Austin and Laura Jean Niland, from San Antonio. Participants (22 total) ranged in age from 8 to 80, making this a truly generational workshop! Many thanks go to Charlie Lockwood of Texas Folklife Resources for his support in making this project possible.

The Not Just Oom-PAH! Workshop offered two scholarships to accordionists under age 18. The two scholarship recipients were: Isaak Wolfshohl & Kyle Crusius. The additional scholarship was made possible with sponsorship from Jim Rice and Dale Wise of Accordion Renaissance, a Virginia-based non-profit, and support from the San Antonio Accordion Association. Our youngest participant, 8 years old, was Ella Grace Broussard, who exhibited great poise throughout the weekend, demonstrating her skills on accordion, fiddle, guitar and voice! Robert Herridge assisted Ella with her music, while her father watched with encouragement. Later in the evening, Robert and Ella produced a YouTube video with assistance from instructor, Traci Goudi of Austin.

The program instructors included: Ginny Mac (Dallas, TX) teaching Gypsy Jazz, Jan Flemming (Austin, TX) teaching South American rhythms, Mario Pedone (Sugar Land, TX) teaching eclectic world music and accompaniments, Shirley Johnson (Austin, TX) teaching Eastern European music styles, and Traci Goudie (Austin, TX) demonstrating YouTube video techniques with equipment recommendations and demos. The day-and-a-half workshop sessions were packed with interesting music and instruction which were included in their workshop notebooks.

Saturday instruction occurred from 9AM-8PM, with breaks for breakfast, lunch, dinner, where folks greeted Nick Ballarini who brought accordions and other items for demo and sale. Ginny Mac demonstrated how to accompany a vocalist, and also taught “how to improvise” with simple transitions in popular gypsy jazz music and swing styles. Jan Flemming also demonstrated different bass styles and rhythms typical in South American music and taught how to “make your performance interesting by varying transitions, comping, bass patterns, and more”. Both Jan and Ginny played along with participants, eventually asking individuals to test their skills at improvise with positive feedback and encouragement. Shirley Johnson moved the group into different tempos including 7/8, and others typical in Eastern European dances. Shirley presented a variety of music that gave participants a chance to experience the versatility of the accordion in application to different genres of music. Traci Goudie wrapped up the day with valuable instruction on “How to Produce a YouTube Video”, which included discussions on the latest inexpensive equipment, lighting techniques and more. Goudie was very helpful in demonstrating different types of equipment and assisted several individuals in producing their own recording on site. It was an lengthy, but enjoyable Saturday with a plethora of great information and instruction.

Sunday instruction continued with eclectic world music from Mario Pedone. Workshop attendees participated in orchestral arrangements (trios), improved their speed with practice drills, learned how to embellish their music, and how to “Play along with Mario” by keeping tempo with background music. Afterwards, it was time to say our “good-byes” for the workshop and get ready for the evening concert.

The Sunday evening Father’s Day concert was held at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Austin, with outstanding performanc-



Left to right: Ben Bradshaw, Ginny Mac, Jan Flemming, Laura Jean Niland, Shirley Johnson, Michael Longoria

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es by Mario Pedone, Ginny Mac and Jan Flemming with Grupo Massa (Flemming, Michael Longoria-percussion, Ben Bradshaw-bass). The audience could see accordions brought by Nick Ballarini, and music instructional videos and CDS brought by accordionists Debra Peters and Mike Middleton. The audience was thrilled with the musical variety and styles. Ginny Mac joined in with Jan Flemming and Grupo Massa playing Brazilian music and swing styles. Ginny also played some of her latest music, including a beautiful waltz she wrote. She is an accomplished vocalist, song-writer, accordionist and musician and her performance was superb. Mario Pedone played a variety of popular music including jazz, modern, American classics, South American and European music as well. Jan Flemming and Grupo Massa brought the audience to its toes with dancing music. The concert performance was fabulous and the audience gave a standing ovation for these fine musicians. We all wished there was more time and more music!

Many thanks to all who participated in the Not Just Oom-PAH! Workshop and Concert. We look forward to additional projects that support our favorite instrument, the accordion!



Photos from Not Just Oom-PAH! Accordion Workshop and Concert June 16-17, 2018, Austin, TX

Workshop held at Texas Folklife Resources, Concert at Trinity United Methodist Church



L1: Jan Flemming
L2: Mario Pedone
L3: Ginny Mac w/ Jan Flemming & Grupo Massa
L4: Jan Flemming w/ Grupo Massa (Michael Longoria, Ben Bradshaw)



R1: Shirley Johnson
R2: Ginny Mac



R3: Traci Goudie conducting YouTube video recording
R4: Mario Pedone at concert
Center: Ginny Mac at Concert

