



The **ACCORDIONAIRES ORCHESTRA** in concert

It was Sunday, May 31, and the members of the Accordionaires Orchestra were up early and traveled to Thousand Oaks to begin their final rehearsal for the concert with the Conejo Valley Youth Orchestras. Our gang had to report by nine, so almost everyone had been up since five or six that morning. At the Fred Kavli Theater in the Thousand Oaks Civic Plaza

musicians from all the orchestras were arriving and young folks with instruments large and small were getting organized for their time on stage. Rehearsal started promptly at nine and the Accordionaires were on stage from the beginning.

How did we get here? The Accordionaires Orchestra about to rehearse a concert being held in an auditorium with 1800 patrons soon to arrive—some background is required. A while back Janet Hane's daughter, Debbie (who is professional trombonist) introduced her mom to Bill Benson, conductor of the Conejo Valley Youth Orchestras. Bill came to an Accordionaires Orchestra rehearsal and decided including them in the EUROFEST concert would add an unexpected and exciting aspect to this final concert of the CVYO season. This was an opportunity to perform in a fantastic venue with great musicians, and the members of the Accordionaires Orchestra were excited, intrigued, and a little worried. All the emotions turned into energy, dedication, and practice--now, the day was here.



The Accordionaires Orchestra consists of Janet Hane, Director

Joe Blasco, Mickey Birnbaum, Bass
Accordion, Gail Campanella, Domenico
Carlino, Daniel Corral, Donna Douglas,
Elwyn Ellis, Chris Feeney, Eric Johnson,
Arlene Klein, Karen Lee, Bob Moloznik,
Norm Panto, Michael Potter, Richard
Selfridge, Pat Striplin, Alicia Wollerton,
Paula Yankopoulos, and Tina Curtis,
Drums

During the first stage of rehearsal the sound crew was hard at work strategically placing the microphones in order to provide balanced sound reproduction for the 1800 seat auditorium. When the Accordionaires played alone the other orchestra members watched intently—an accordion orchestra was something new to them. During the rehearsal with the Conejo Youth Strings the sounds of our accordions became almost like woodwinds. This sound sensation highlighted the fact that the accordion is an excellent orchestral instrument—it can enhance and work with most musical presentations.

As William Benson (Artistic Director and Conductor) and Karen Sanchez (Youth Strings Director) worked with the orchestras that were combined with the Accordionaires it was fascinating to see the rapport they had with their group as well as ours. The Conejo Valley Youth Orchestras is a wonderful venue for young musicians. The staff wants them to have fun, to enjoy music, but also to learn, and excel. Their leadership goes beyond the



podium by giving these young folks real-time, real-life examples of how to interact with people in the course of complex tasks. It didn't take much observation during the rehearsal to realize the extensive undertaking that was occurring on stage. Bill and Karen kept the show running efficiently, smoothly, and got the results they needed.



Photo courtesy of MARK DANIEL PHOTOGRAPHY

The concert began at three in the afternoon. It had already been a long day, but the excitement of the moment had everyone ready for action. The house was buzzing with the electricity that accompanies a 100% capacity crowd. The overall program was extensive with 23 pieces on the play list. The Accordionaires performed the following works:

Vienna City of My Dreams, Malaga, Sleeping Beauty (waltz), Bagatelle Overture (an Accordionaires solo presentation), Manha de Carnival (Dan Desiderio), and the Radetzky March.



Before the final two songs, Janet Hane was on stage for a solo performance with her Roland FR7. Janet's presentation was: La Vie en Rose/Tico Tico medley, and Carnival of Venice, Variations by Frosini. Bill Benson had heard the Roland during a visit with Janet and wanted the audience to experience an accordion that contained its own orchestra. Janet received a standing ovation as the audience showed their appreciation.

The final two performances of the day were a joint presentation of the CVYO and the Accordionaires. At the conclusion of the music the entire hall took to their feet as applause rang out for many minutes, and the leaders (including Janet) received flowers.



This was likely a very different performance for the audience and the young musicians since they were exposed to more accordion music this afternoon than they had been in their lives. And for the Accordionaires Orchestra this moment was greatly rewarding and a highlight never before attained. Our folks had broad smiles on their faces—they couldn't have been happier. The opportunity to perform with such talented musicians who are also great young folks (all destined to have as much musical success as they wish to pursue), and to work with the CVYO staff was an occasion that all Accordionaires will remember the rest of their lives.

Congratulations to our fine Accordionaires Orchestra! Thank you for the hours of hard work you and Janet have spent honing your talent. And THANK YOU to Bill Benson, Karen Sanchez, and everyone involved with the Conejo Valley Youth Orchestras for including the Accordionaires in your concert. Your hospitality, kindness, and leadership made this experience a pinnacle for the Accordionaires.

Live concert photos provided by MARK DANIEL PHOTOGRAPHY
Simi Valley, Ca. (805) 526-1475 or MDPHOTO.net



ON THE CALENDAR

Upcoming events that are certain to be interesting....

JUNE--Rose City Accordion Club Silver Falls Accordion Camp, Sun June 7 through Friday June 12, 2009 for more information email GLEvear@aol.com or call (503) 292-0322 or (503) 436-9909

JUNE—June 18-21 Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration Contact: (509) 548-5807 or see www.leavenworth.org or email info@leavenworth.org

JUNE—June 26-28 ACCORDIONS BY THE SEA FESTIVAL, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Contact: midimary@shaw.ca or formanpm@shaw.ca or (250) 360-2085 OR victoriaaccordionclub.com

JULY—July 6-12, Kimberly International Accordion Championships, Kimberly, B.C., Canada. Contact: info@kiotac.ca or (888) 454-0822

JULY—July 26-31, Galla-Rini Accordion Camp, San Rafael, Ca. Info: Marian Kelly (650) 854-1896 or email: tarild@gotsky.com

JULY—July 31, Aug 1 Philipsburg, Montana, Rocky Mountain Accordion Festival, Info call : 406-859-3812 or email: quigleybb@yahoo.com

AUGUST—Aug 14-16 54th Ann. AFNA Music Festival, Info: Jack Dermody (602) 237-5627 or email AZAccordion.Club@cox.net

AUGUST—Aug 22, 23 Cotati Accordion Festival, Cotati, Ca. Info: info@cotatifest.com or call (707) 664-0444

SEPTEMBER—Accordion Extravaganza Festival, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada Email: accordion@geri.ca

OCTOBER—Las Vegas International Accordion Convention—Oct 19-22, Gold Coast Hotel. Phone 800-472-1695 or email vegas@accordioninfo.com