

Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG)

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Contact the ATG

Stas Venglevski, President
 13965 Tremont Street, Brookfield, WI 53005
 Phone/Fax: (262) 641-9056
 E-mail: stas.venglevski@verizon.net

Internet Site: www.accordions.com/atg

News from USA-ATG...

The Story of the ATG: The Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International (ATG) was established in 1940 by a group of 29 founding members (including ATG President Emeritus - Anthony Galla-Rini) with the purpose of furthering the progress of the accordion by improving teaching standards, music, and all phases of music education.

In 1951 Anthony Galla-Rini successfully petitioned the ATG as a member CIA during the General Assembly in Paris, France. Since then, the ATG has sent many participants to the CIA Coupe Mondiale including three who won this prestigious competition including Donald Hulme in 1961, John Torcello in 1972 and Peter Soave in 1984.

The ATG has sponsored the Accordion Conference Week at the famous National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan and has worked with the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) which is part of the National Association of Education. In addition, the ATG has sponsored several International Competition for Accordion Soloists as well as composition competitions. The ATG has also commissioned numerous compositions for the accordion by such composers as Alan Hovhaness, Ole Schmidt, Torbjorn Lundquist, Francis Pyle and Ernst Krenek.

The annual festival is held in a different location each year and students, teachers and enthusiasts travel from all parts of the United States and abroad to attend this event.

The emphasis is on excellence with competitions for all ages including adult hobby. Categories include solo, original compositions, polkas, duets, pop duets and combos, ensembles, orchestras and show bands. Other events include a banquet for all participants, workshops, displays, a grand concert and other special activities providing the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with fellow accordionists from around the world.

2004 Festival in Milwaukee: The Accordionists and Teachers Guild, International held its Annual Festival celebrating 64 years of service to the accordion July 21-25, 2004. This year's festival was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the home of the ATG's current president, Stas Venglevski. The festival was very well attended and attracted participants from many different states as well as Canada, Austria, Sweden, Russia, France, Poland, and Ireland.

The Festival Orchestra, conducted by Joan Cochran Sommers, had 85 accordionists in addition to timpanist and percussionists. For several years one of the many attractions of the festival, the orchestra presented two concerts; one in Milwaukee's Peck Pavillion, a premiere outdoor amphitheater, and one in the ballroom of the festival headquarters. Both concerts were extremely well attended. Immediately before the outdoor concert a large group of accordionists gathered close to the river and performed a piece under the direction of Frank Busso. These concerts drew much applause from the attendees and attracted a lot of newspaper and TV publicity and proved once again the popularity of the accordion in such showcase opportunities.