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News from Austria...

The Accordion Association of Austria HVÖ was founded in 1954, which means it celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. It has always been the aim of the Austrian Association to promote the accordion in Austrian public life. Many of Austria's best accordionists of the past decades have also been prize winners in the competitions organized by HVÖ and have represented Austria at successive international competitions. In former times, HVÖ organized workshops in Austria and abroad (mainly in Trossingen, Germany) to expand the experiences of Austrian accordionists.

Nowadays, accordion courses are held at the University of Music in Graz (Styria), the Anton Bruckner Private University in Linz (Upper Austria) and all regional conservatories in Austria. In addition, there are also summer courses held by famous international accordionists such as Friedrich Lips in Imst (Tyrol). To celebrate its 50th anniversary the HVÖ hosted an National Accordion Day in Vienna which featured Exhibitions, Festivals and Concerts. There were categories for soloists, duos, accordion ensembles, accordion orchestras, chamber music with accordion, and the diatonic "Styrian harmonica".

To commemorate its 50th anniversary a jubilee concert with Austria's best accordion soloists, ensembles and orchestras was organised in Vienna's "Odeon" to show the enormous development of the instrument from its very beginning until nowadays.

2004 is also the year of another anniversary: it has been 175 years since Cyrill Demian made his patent of the "Accordion" given by the Viennese Patent Office on May 23rd, 1829.

Here is a little excerpt:

"Demian Cyrill, together with both of his sons Karl and Guido, organ and piano makers, residing at *Mariahilferstrasse* No. 43 in Vienna, present a new instrument -- Accordion -- to the authorities. Its appearance essentially consists of a little box with feathers of metal plates and bellows fixed to it, in such a way that it can easily be carried, and therefore travelling visitors to the country will appreciate the instrument.

It is possible to perform marches, arias, melodies, even by an amateur of music with little practice, and to play the loveliest and most pleasant chords of 3, 4, 5 etc. voices after instruction."

Demian with both of his sons Karl and Guido. A full description can be found at: <http://www.accordion-online.de/instrum/demian.htm>
The English version can be found at <http://www.ksanti.net/free-reed>

Friedl Preisl, organizer of the Viennese Accordion Festival, was originally inspired by the diversity of Otto Lechner's playing. Preisl's goal was to highlight the accordion in Vienna, the city of music. In the beginning the event was scarcely known outside Austria. Now, 70 artists from 23 countries participated in the 5th edition of the festival.

To name just a few: Accordion Tribe, Otto Lechner, Krzysztof Dobrek Guy Klucsevsek & Alan Bern, Luis di Matteo Bands Khupe, beefólk, Bratsch, Ars Harmonika, Desastro Totale, Martin Lubenov. A festival club was opened for spontaneous sessions, workshops were organised at Vienna's Technical Museum.