

## Digital Electronic Accordion Symposium: opening concert in Warren (Nov. 8)

by Robert Rollin



Accordion music remains alive and well in Northeast Ohio. The first evening concert of the International Digital Electronic Accordion Society (IDEAS) symposium took place Friday evening, November 8 at Warren, Ohio's Avalon Inn and Resort. If anything, the organizers outdid last year's opening event.

Jazz and cinematic music took center stage. Highlighting the virtuoso performances was the appearance of New Jersey jazz accordion great Eddie Monteiro (left), accompanied by talented drummer Bob Bacha.

Monteiro's harmonies for Johnny Mandel's *The Shadow of Your Smile* were exquisite in this soulful version. For *Lullaby of Birdland*, Monteiro approximated the vibraphone sound from composer George Shearing's original quintet, including octave doublings. He and Bacha exchanged phrases captivantly.

Monteiro played his own version of Charlie Parker's *Scrapple from the Apple*, a great dialogue with Bacha. The improvised version of *Autumn Leaves* also sparkled, especially in the fast bebop variation.

Rhode Islander Cory Pesaturo joined in for a delightful trio version of George Gershwin's *A Foggy Day in London Town*. He alternated lead choruses with Monteiro, as Bacha continued his sensitive support.

Pesaturo, known for his astonishing technique, raced through a scintillating klezmer improvisation, though the ornamentation was a bit over the top. His presentation of the

six-beat *La Fiesta* was also amazingly fast. The rendition of “Winter” from *The Four Seasons* was impressive, but a little like Vivaldi on steroids.

The young Matthias Matzke, from a very small town near Stuttgart, Germany, has surprisingly sophisticated digital musical ideas. His *All Is Hell That Ends Well* featured film-music qualities and intriguing quasi-orchestral sounds.

An improvisation on a piece by his teacher Hans Günther Kölz included an intriguing stylistic mix, enlivened by exquisite percussion sounds and background digital loops.

California accordionist and sound designer Richard Noel played *The Streets of Bakersfield* with energy and skill. Later his digital cowbell brightened things, as Bacha accompanied with subtlety.

Joseph Natoli’s opening set included his own *Nostalgique*, which transformed a Czerny piano exercise into a soulful jazz waltz.

Accordionists Kenn Baert, Eddie Monteiro, Lenny Feldmann, and Michael Soloway joined Natoli and Bacha for *Frank’s Samba*, a tribute to accordionist/composer Frank Mazzocco.

Two Natoli compositions highlighted a duo set played by Natoli and Soloway. “Deborah’s Theme” from *Once Upon A Time in America* is a cinematic tribute to film composer Ennio Morricone, and a sensitive arrangement of Arlen’s *Over the Rainbow* was a memorial for Natoli’s late nephew. The audience responded warmly to all the performances, and the organizers should be proud.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com November 25, 2019.*

*Click here for a printable copy of this article*

[Return to the Front Page.](#)