

Henry Doktorski at Harrington ARTS Center

Henry Doktorski Concert

Harrington ARTS Center

Hanni Strahl Concert Hall

Helen and Theodor Miller Concert Series

April 3, 2005

3:00 PM

Every time I hear Henry Doktorski play I am yet more impressed with his clean articulations of demandingly virtuoso music. His program in celebration of the installation of two performance instruments from vaudeville greats Guido and Pietro Deiro was chosen from their original compositions. These repertoires require of the performer fast fingers and acute perception of style—even humor in music. Henry shows his skills masterfully and proves that he should be considered **THE** specialist of this era.

Composed at a time when “rousing” and “enthusiastic” demanded fast runs and figurations that draw attention, the music aptly depicts the scene for which it was created. Henry's portrayals were all of that, and more--sometimes comical, carnivalesque, military, glib. If not great art in the sense of European masters of composition, this music requires accuracy, virtuoso technique, fluent speed, and dynamic control, all of which Henry delivers with aplomb. His stage presence suited each piece and added the entertainer's touch that thrills audiences into enthusiastic involvement. A totally exemplary experience.

Henry's sterling performance provides fresh incentive for inclusion of this accordion Americana in general concerts and competitions. His two-CD set of the complete music of Guido Deiro is recommended to everyone. But to those who experience Henry's live concert, the recordings serve as reference reminders of only part of the music's potential. The rest must be supplied by the performer—who will hopefully have learned persuasive skills from Henry.

Henry Doktorski Lecture-Demonstration

Music of the Brothers Deiro

Harrington ARTS Center

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1:00 PM

Preceding the concert, Henry offered a lecture-demonstration that concerned not only the music but also life-events and personalities of the brothers Deiro. Often quoting from his book The Brother Deiro, Henry's biographical research comes from the Guido Deiro materials housed in *The Free Reed Society* of CUNY, under the auspices of Dr. Allan Atlas. Donated to that institution by Count Guido Roberto Deiro (Las Vegas, NV), the body of materials includes manuscripts, concert programs, personal itineraries, albums of chronologically assembled reviews, and similar materials evidencing an active and multifaceted life.

Henry's depictions brought these two men to life—real people with strengths and foibles. Our admiration for their permanent contributions to accordion Americana is heightened by awareness of whirlwinds in professional careers and in personal evolutions. Stories about Guido Deiro were generally more abundant and positive, an understandable position considering the conventional prestige accorded to younger brother Pietro. Henry's work may contribute to the raising of Guido's name from a footnote to another headline in accordion history, including some challenge to Pietro's empire. Despite the assertion that Pietro “stole” compositions from Guido by assigning his own name to Guido's work, Pietro's overwhelming influence remains among the most important and far-reaching in the development of early piano accordion literature in the USA.

The audience remained fascinated throughout Henry's lively narrative. But he did more than speak, he also demonstrated the sound of original compositions on the performance instruments of Guido and Pietro. The 1917 and 1926 Guerrini accordions were subsequently disassembled and shown to audience members. Among them were several former students of each brother. Invited to participate through personal reminiscences and tidbits of history, they further sparked the event.

Henry's pioneering work has been published in a book entitled The Brothers Deiro, a well-written documentary containing many detailed photographs. He has recorded the complete opus of Guido Deiro in a two-CDs set. Both book and CDs are a **MUST-HAVE** for every accordionist, cultural historian, and Americana aficionado. They are available through Henry's website.

Henry is a marvelously interesting speaker whose scholarly approach is spiced by humor and a sense of complex reality, no fairy-tale idealizations. He should be heard at every event where accordionists gather.

Installation of Two Performance Accordions from the Brothers Deiro

Harrington ARTS Center

Duane Sellman Special Exhibits Area of A World of Accordions Museum

April 3, 2005

1:00 PM

Among the landmark events in the history of *A World of Accordions Museum* must be counted the installation of two Guerrini piano accordions, dated 1917 and 1926. Through the recommendations of Henry Doktorski, Count Guido Roberto Deiro (son of Guido Deiro) and Sandra Deiro Cattani (granddaughter of Pietro Deiro) donated personal performance instruments of their forebears for display to a larger public. We gratefully recognize their generosity and hope that their trust will be celebrated through enhanced public awareness of two great figures in American accordion history.

During his visit to *A World of Accordions Museum* in July of 2003, Henry was inspired to encourage moving Guido Deiro's accordion out of CUNY storage. Count Deiro then suggested Mrs. Cattani also contribute to The Brothers Deiro display. The instruments have been placed in the *Duane Sellman Special Exhibits Area*, part of the *Hanni Strahl Concert Hall*, next to displays about Charles Magnante, Hugo Herrmann, Friedrich Lips, and Pietro Frosini (pending).

This installation also marks a first collaboration between our museum and *Center for the Study of Free Reed Instruments at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York*, under the direction of Dr. Allan A. Atlas.

Concurrent with the installation, Henry gave our *Accordion Resource Center Libraries* a copy of his book [The Brothers Deiro](#). This is a very important contribution to scholarship on the subject of the vaudeville era, the biographies of Guido and Pietro Deiro, and the documentation through detailed photographs of the two Guerrini accordions. It is highly recommended for every aficionado's library, and is available through Henry Doktorski's website.

Both accordions will soon enjoy museum-quality restoration and then be included in performances and exhibits at major accordion events throughout the USA through *A World of Accordions Traveling Museum*.