



Alliance Française of Greater Orlando



MARCH 2020 NEWSLETTER

THE ACCORDION: A FRENCH ICON

Indelibly associated with notions of smoke-filled French cafés and Parisian dance halls, the accordion, with lively melodies and underlying melancholy, is the quintessential French icon, though it was invented in Vienna.

However, the venues where this instrument thrived were very much a French product, having been brought to Paris by musicians from the Auvergne region. The Auvergnats opened wine shops where they performed the traditional "bourrée" accompanied by bagpipes known as the "musette". Open to all classes, the "bal musette" had a romantic and raffish charm that contributed to the growth of their popular appeal. By the late 1800s, there were about 150 such dance halls in Paris.

After World War I, an influx of foreigners brought new sounds such as swing, jazz, polka and tango that accordion players incorporated more or less in their music.

During World War II, the Nazi occupiers initially banned music "with foreign influence". But when Paris sprang to life in 1950s, the "bal musette" became a popular form of dance all over France.

By the 1960s, the accordion had become the sound of popular France, both at home and overseas, thanks to exponents like André Verchuren and Yvette Horner. Edith Piaf paid tribute to the musicians in "L'Accordéoniste", one of the most popular love songs.

The accordion went out of favor during the 1970s, with the growth of rock and pop music. However, interest in France's iconic music was revived in the 1990's with various groups making it cool to enjoy the accordion once more.

Surviving changes in musical tastes, the instrument remains a potent symbol of French popular culture.

EARLY WARNING!

AFGO traditional Spring Grand Picnic will take place this year on Sunday, April 19. Mark your calendar to reserve that date for a joyful event, with a delicious lunch, a book fair, a raffle and, of course, a pétanque tournament. Within a couple of weeks, you will receive a flyer with all the details.

MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sunday, March 8: Picnic(potluck)/pétanque, starting at 12:30 pm, at Mead Botanical Garden (Winter Park).
- Saturday, March 21: Movie night, starting at 6:00 pm with a potluck dinner, followed by the projection of a French movie subtitled in English.

