

“Festival Internazionale della Fisarmonica Digitale”

Accordion has always been one of the most interesting musical instruments in Italy's cultural and historical panorama.

In the last few decades however its image has been confined to that of an instrument used only to play folk music.

At present, however, contemporary music including Pop, Rock, Latin and Jazz music, are newly discovering the role of accordion, which is even used by worldwide famous stars for concerts as well as for the production of their albums.

By its newly developed digital accordion, called “V-Accordion”, Roland wants to contribute to expand the image of this musical instrument in the international music scene.

The 1st International V-Accordion Festival is organized for this purpose. As stated in its rules, “*creative and future-oriented accordionists*” may apply for this contest, which is therefore open not only to musicians who already have a V-Accordion but also to musicians playing acoustic accordions, who wish to explore the new opportunities offered by the V-Accordion.

The Festival will take place in the “Pedrotti” Auditorium of the “G. Rossini” music academy in Pesaro, at **21:00**, on **Saturday, 10th November 2007**. The festival will consist in an international contest and a gala performance, where all contestants from every category (soloists and bands) will play while the jury will choose the absolute winners. Admission is free.

Simone Zanchini will be the special guest. He is one the most interesting and innovative musicians in the international music scene and will propose some examples of his music, on the edge between contemporary, acoustic and electronic music.

The chairman of the jury will be **Marco Giannotti**, the Director of the “G. Rossini” music academy in Pesaro. Other members of the jury are some prestigious musicians from the accordion milieu, such as **Gervasio Marcosignori**, winner of the world accordion Oscar prize, **Pierpaolo Salvucci**, music historian, musicologist and conductor of an accordion orchestra, **Sergio Scappini**, concert performer and accordion teacher at the “G. Verdi” music academy in Milan, **Marco Lo Russo**, composer for Rai Trade and accordionist in Nicola Piovani's group, **Mirco Patarini**, concert performer and publisher of the “Strumenti & Musica” magazine, **Kimmo Mattila**, director of the Finnish accordion institute in Ikaalinen, **Luigi Bruti**, author of the V-Accordion project and Marketing Director of Roland Europe SpA, **Akira Hanechi**, President of Roland Europe S.p.A.

The best accordionists, who were selected in all the countries participating in this festival, will play at the gala concert. They come from Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, France, Benelux, Spain, Portugal, Czech Republic, Canada and Brazil.

These musicians passed their domestic qualifying rounds among a large number of contestants. Various national contests have often turned into important events with large audiences. This is, for example, the case of Brazil, where the final selection event at the “Elis Regina” Auditorium in San Paolo recorded more than 800 spectators.

Accordion and V-accordion history

Around mid 19th century an invention consisting of bellows and a free-reed mechanism appeared in central Europe. A completely new musical instrument was born: accordion. This new instrument deeply influenced the popular music of that time and brought a large number of people closer to the music universe. To meet the variegated demands of the numerous local musicians, accordion has become more and more versatile through decades, so that it has never resulted to be a standardised musical instrument. So far it has been practically impossible to make an electronic version of the acoustic accordion, essentially because this instrument consists of a quite complicated mechanism and is very easy to carry around.

In 1967 Ikutaro Kakehashi, the founder of the Roland Corporation, a leading manufacturer of electronic musical instruments, travelled to Italy and had the chance to meet some accordion craftsmen in the Castelfidardo area. He was so fascinated by this instrument that he bought two accordions to bring home and started to cherish the dream of creating an electronic accordion.

This dream was later on supported also by Francesco Rauchi and Luigi Bruti in Roland Europe S.p.A., a member of the Roland Corporation group located in Europe, namely in Acquaviva Picena, in the Marche region.

Thanks to the advanced state-of-the-art achieved by the digital technology, Roland could finally add another milestone in the history of digital musical instruments: the V-Accordion, namely the “Virtual Accordion” equipped with a powerful digital modelling technology.

Francesco Rauchi passed away prematurely and could not see that dream become true. But to honour his memory the models of the V-Accordion line-up are identified with the “FR” acronym.

The V-Accordion results from a synergy between Italian fantasy and Japanese technology, between Marche's traditional craftsmanship in the accordion production and electronics applied to musical instruments.

To reach this goal Roland established a close relation with the craftsmen and technicians of the accordion manufacturing companies in Castelfidardo and its surrounding area.

This way Roland was able to perfectly reproduce the accordion sounds by using the modern digital technology based on the “physical modelling of sounds”, that does not alter the way some essential components, such as the bellows, must be used. The air pumped by the bellows, in fact, is properly conveyed to excite no reeds any longer but a high-definition pressure sensor. Roland designed an innovative accordion without disrupting either its traditional nature or the musical technique required to play it.

The V-Accordion can truly reproduce the various models of traditional accordions, including their different tuning features. As a consequence you can turn a V-Accordion immediately into an Italian accordion, a French Musette, a jazz accordion or a bandoneon.

It is not intended to replace the traditional accordion but to complement it and enlarge its sound potential, while keeping its expressive features unchanged as well as that peculiar feeling conveyed by a musical instrument you can only play by “holding it in your arms”.