

SLOVENIAN BUTTON ACCORDIAN PROJECT

Tape Notes

4/12/84

jwb

INTERVIEW WITH: Fritz Mishmash and Louie Sherek

AT: Fritz Mishmash Home Tapes: Reels SBB 04,05
22 No. Erie Street Cassette CSBB 3
Aurora, MN 55706 Slides: Sheet 1; 12-16

DATE: April 12, 1984

Fritz Mishmash is 67 years old. His father came from Kr and his mother from Ljubljana. Fritz is married and has three children--a son who teaches in Silver Bay, a daughter who lives in Wayzata, and another daughter who is a medical technician in Hibbing. He worked for the Erie Mining Company and then as an iron worker on construction jobs for 22 years and has worked for 13 years at schools in Aurora.

Louie Sherek lives in Biwabik. His father comes from Stचना and his mother from Dobran Pola. Louie's mother worked in a boarding house and his father worked for Klink beer distributors driving a team and delivering beer. Louie lived at Bangor and Pineville where his father worked underground in the mines until a cave-in and then the family moved to Biwabik. His father started working for schools in 1925. Louie was born in 1918, second to the youngest of thirteen children, and is presently 66.

Louie worked in mines in Biwabik, Lake mine and St. James mine and then worked at the schools for 25 years. He has two daughters--one is a dental assistant in Aurora and the other a cook at the Hibbing Elks Club.

Fritz' oldest brother had a button accordion. In 1971 he met a kid at school whose father had one to sell and he bought it and then had John Bolster fix it up. It was a four row Lubas. He started playing thirteen years ago starting when he was in his 50's.

Louie went with his folks, as a kid, to weddings and house parties. He wanted to learn to play. His mother said no and his father wouldn't buy one. When he was 29 he got his first accordion. Bob Pushcar influenced him.

Both Louie and Fritz heard music all through their lives. Louie said, "You have to have it in the head." He has heard Tony and Louie Skrbitz, Tony Gregorich, and a man named Martinalich, and Beanie Boben, who now plays a chromatic. Louie had Hoyer and Kucar records. He started with a piano accordion and had to change his style.

Fritz played for the guys around town and now learns from tapes. He has heard Hoyer who was an old accordionist in the 1920's in Cleveland and also Kucar. Fritz goes to jam sessions and belongs to the Range

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Polka Club. Louie and Fritz play together once a week. They will play at a church social for the ushers and choir, etc. They don't want to play for four hours. They like to play for the family or for somebody they know. They took part in the community play 'Mr. Scrooge' last Christmas. They have been playing together for three years. Neither one of them wanted to travel to Hibbing to practice, they had different styles but complemented each other's style. They got together in Chisholm and Louie said, "Holy man," they "played together pretty good". Louie also said, "I don't belong to nothing-- I got a marriage license, that's all."

Fritz likes to hear 'a good player on tape'. He didn't make the trip to Joliet with the Range group because it was too short and too much time on the bus. They left at 4:00 a.m. on Saturday, played Saturday night and came back home on Sunday. There are a lot of players on the Range. There is a jam session on Sundays at Bowers, a bar north of Chisholm.

Louie finds playing enjoyable and relaxing. He says, "You pick up the accordian and play and you forget all your problems, all your troubles." He prefers to practice when he's alone in the house. His wife never hears him practice (He plays when she's out). His wife knows music, she can sing all the songs. Louie does some yodeling which he picked up from his dad who is Austrian and was a good yodeler.

Fritz said Sunday morning was the peak of his day. He likes to play on Sunday morning. He said alcohol and accordian do not mix--a couple is all right.

Louie said a good accordian player is just like a carpenter--"you can cover up your mistakes."

Fritz plays a 4 row Melodija, German style, ~~since he was~~ five years old. Louie bought a used Kusar in 1950 for \$125.00. The same instrument sold for \$90.00, new, in 1947. The Kusar has Slovenian fingering. He talks about comparing chord formations, fingering differences and how the Melodija fingerboard is stepped; the Slovenian style is flat. The fingering is different, but they sound good together and have different chords.

SONGS

- * 'Waltz', a Johnny Pecon number (JB's ? "a favorite song?" underlies first few notes.)
*YOU'RE ALL I ASK FOR (OR) (HEERUP
 (CP) SWEETHEART
 (FY)*
- 'Polka', a Pecon number
- * 'Polka' *MIS-TRE
~~HYSTERY~~ POLKA
 as in Mishulin - Trebar* (tape ran out on 1st reel, done over again)
- * 'Slak Waltz'
- 'Beyond the Reef' - Fritz' solo
- * 'Louie's solo - Waltz' (L-bass, R-melody "Hoo Hoo Old Time")
- 'Waltz' (has two more parts he hasn't learned yet)
- 'Waltz' (played again with split in melody last section)
- 'German Polka'
- 'Waltz'
- 'Waltz of the Grapes' (good bass run)

Louie talking about using the thumb--most do not use thumb only 3 or 4 fingers. The boxes have a groove along fingerboard and Louie's box has a worn spot.

- 'Polka' (Fritz comes in a little late with melody)