



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Honors Three Area Musical Artists at Italian American Heritage Month Celebration

PETE HARCKHAM October 27, 2022

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Cortlandt Manor, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham commemorated Italian American Heritage Month recently by honoring three musical artists from the 40th Senate District—accordionist-composer Mario Tacca and vocalist Mary Mancini, a husband and wife who perform together, and pianist-composer-educator Pete Malinverni—during a special ceremony and luncheon held at Little Sorrento, a local restaurant here.

“Throughout their careers, these three individuals have used their musical talents to contribute to the cultural and artistic vitality of New York State while entertaining audiences everywhere, even around the world,” said Harckham, who presented framed State Senate Proclamations to the three honorees. “The

beauty of the arts is in how it enriches our lives in so many ways while allowing us to communicate ideas and emotions. The world is a better place because of Mario, Mary and Pete, thanks to their commitment and willingness to share their gifts.”

To see a video of the Heritage Month award presentations, click [here](#).

Cortlandt Manor residents Mario Tacca and Mary Mancini married in 1975, and began performing locally at the Paramount Hudson Valley Theater in Peekskill, NY. They have since traveled across the country and around the world performing their music. To date, they have recorded ten albums together, including *Canzoni Dal Cuore Italian Love Songs* and *It's a Wonderful World*. Both are active in the music program at the Church of the Assumption in Peekskill as well.

Tacca is originally from the Abruzzo region in Southern Italy. During his childhood, his family moved to the Alsace-Lorraine region of France, where he discovered his love for music and developed a passion for the accordion. He immigrated to the United States in 1959 and settled in Peekskill. After entering into the American Accordionists Association's competition circuit, Tacca won the 1962 international championship held at Carnegie Hall. Today, he continues to dazzle audiences with his unmatched musical virtuosity.

Mary Mancini, a Peekskill native, started singing at the age of 11 in the choir at the Church of Assumption. She took over two decades of vocal lessons and is now able to sing in eight different languages. Over the years, Mancini has performed at numerous concert halls and festivals in North America, Europe, and China. Some of her most memorable moments included performances in Shenzhen held at the Opera House and the True Color Jazz Supper Club.

Pound Ridge resident Pete Malinverni has been a fixture on the New York City jazz scene since the early 1980s. He is originally from Niagara Falls, NY, where he began classical piano studies at the age of six. After earning a bachelor's degree in music education from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, he studied piano and composition while pursuing a Master of Music degree from the Conservatory of Music at Purchase College. Malinverni has recorded sixteen albums as a leader in a variety of settings: solo piano, piano and violin duet, trio, quartet, quintet and big band. This year he released *On the Town: Pete Malinverni Plays Leonard Bernstein*, which was inspired by a chance meeting with the maestro back in the 1980s. Although his work as a composer has been primarily in jazz, Malinverni has composed sacred music as well, a result of his ongoing efforts in inspirational settings, such as the Devoe Street Baptist Church in Brooklyn, where he has served as Minister of Music for the last 18 years. He holds a similar position at Pound Ridge Community Church and leads a Jazz Vespers series there as well. After teaching stints at both William Paterson University and New York University, Malinverni served as the chair of Jazz Studies at the Conservatory of Music at SUNY Purchase College for 10 years until June of 2022.

Italian American Heritage Month is an annual celebration of the history and culture of the Italian people here in the U.S. Coinciding with Columbus Day holiday, the celebration spans the entire month of October, and commemorates how the Italian people have influenced and contributed to American culture and society.