

# Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA)

Member International Music Council, IMC-UNESCO

## Kevin FRIEDRICH – CIA Ambassador

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## CIA Honored Friend of the Accordion Award Presentation Speech

On behalf of the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (CIA) Executive Committee, it is a great pleasure to be here today during this 40th Anniversary Festival. I have the added bonus of not only representing the CIA, but also being here as a proud NZAA Life Member.

When John Statham's father gave his eight year old son an accordion for Christmas, he could not have known the significant part the instrument was to play in his life. John took lessons from Victor Johnson, Eddie McCullough, Peter Torckler and Allan Jones, culminating in him winning the New Zealand Solo Accordion Championship Title at the 1967 NZ Accordion Competitions.

He began to take a strong role in accordion activities, joining the committee of the newly formed NZAA in 1971. An active part of the 1980 Coupe Mondiale organizing committee, as part of the promotion, John's contribution also included successfully breaking the Guinness Book World Record for non stop accordion playing. John successfully completed 81 hours playing, drawing a lot of media attention to the 1980 Coupe Mondiale as well as raising a considerable amount of money for the event. In addition to compering the entire 1980 Coupe Mondiale Festival, John has compered almost every NZAA Competition Festival since, as well as many other of the NZAA sponsored events.

The accordion has played a major part of John's life - as a professional entertainer for many years, including performing on National Radio and recording an EP in 1985. As a teacher, John has had the pleasure of seeing two of his students, Lance Lincoln and Judith Lincoln become New Zealand Solo Accordion Champions.

John has served on the Board of the Accordion Examination Board of New Zealand (AEBNZ) for 28 years in various roles, currently holding the Vice Chairman position.

In 1982 John was elected the President of the NZAA and has steered his hard working committee on a steady course during his 27 years in this position. Under his leadership and guidance the NZAA has accomplished many exciting things during these Golden years of the accordion in NZ, including some of the projects that John was successful in such as:

- leading the NZAA in establishing the South Pacific Accordion Championships making the NZAA competitions an International event
- inviting the Winners of the CIA International Competition for Piano Accordion to New Zealand for the last 9 years
- the establishment of the Coupe Mondiale development program for young accordionists culminating in numerous highly placed competitors at the NZ hosted 2009 Coupe Mondiale
- contributing to the tremendous success of the 2009 Coupe Mondiale in Takapuna, and of course watching one of NZ's proudest accordion moments unfold when Grayson Masefield was crowned the Coupe Mondiale winner and now of course, thanks to John and his team, we have this extraordinary NZAA 40th Anniversary Celebration Festival.

It is with pleasure that the CIA acknowledges John Statham for his years of dedication and commitment to the NZAA and the advancement of the accordion in New Zealand, by unanimously awarding him the CIA Honored Friend of the Accordion Award.

Kevin Friedrich  
Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes  
CIA Ambassador

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