

## **Twin Win for Joey Tomsick at Polka Hall of Fame Awards Radio Host Tony Petkovsek Honored at 24th Gala Presentation**

EUCLID, OH – Accordionist and bandleader Joey Tomsick enjoyed a twin win as Musician of the Year and for Band of the Year at the 24th annual awards ceremony presented by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum on Saturday, November 26, 2011. Radio personality Tony Petkovsek was honored for his 50 years of broadcasting a daily Slovenian polka show. The gala program was the high point of the annual Thanksgiving polka music weekend hosted by Petkovsek since 1963. He will be retiring at the end of the year. The Polka Hall of Fame will sponsor the festival in 2012.

Petkovsek was named Chairman Emeritus of the Polka Hall of Fame. An achievement award bearing his name was also announced. Jure Zmauc, Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia, presented a proclamation to him from Dr. Bostjan Zeks, the country's Minister for Slovenes Abroad. Petkovsek has been one of the U. S.'s leading boosters of tourism to Slovenia.

“People always tell me how listening to my polka show has touched their lives,” said Petkovsek. “I won't be completely retired. I'll be broadcasting three hours each Saturday on WELW-AM. There's still a need for good music and reports on our active polka and Slovenian scenes. And the Petkovsek Award will be a perpetual honor for me.”

The all-star presentation was held at Euclid Auditorium in Euclid, Ohio, before an audience of more than 1,000. Three accordionists and bandleaders were inducted into the Polka Hall of Fame. Fred Kuhar of Wickliffe, Ohio, Bob Timko of Dunedin, Florida, and Hank Thunander, from St. Paul, Minnesota, were honored for their lifetime achievements in polka music, as voted by Polka Hall of Fame members and trustees.

The Awards Show featured several Polka Hall of Fame honorees, including Canada's Polka King, Walter Ostanek; Las Vegas bandleader Roman Possedi; Joey Miskulin, accordionist for the cowboy combo, Riders in the Sky; and Fred Ziwich, who directed the stage orchestra. Featured performers included the Singing Slovenes of Minnesota; accordionist Alex Meixner of Florida, and accordionist Matt Frank and the Wojtila Orchestra, both of Cleveland. Master of ceremonies Ray Somich introduced guest presenters, such as TV personality Jan Jones and polka radio hosts from around the country. The show was directed by Ray Somich II. A reception and polka dance at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Cleveland followed the program.

"This was a spectacular show and truly a class act," said Katherine Seufert, a Canadian polka enthusiast from Vancouver, British Columbia. "The quality of the music is exemplary, and I've attended shows all over the world. We'll be back next year."

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"The weekend was a grand reunion of most of the best performers across polka music country," commented Cecilia Dolgan, President of the Polka Hall of Fame and producer of the Awards Show. "The show and the dance that follows are opportunities for fans to see these stars in person."

The Recording of the Year was presented to Bob Kravos and the Boys in the Band for "Something for Everyone." Dan Peters' composition, "Arlene's Waltz," was named Best New Song. Other winners were Kathy Hlad for Button Accordionist; the Fairport Jammers for Button Accordion Ensemble; radio deejay Ed Ostry for Support and Promotion; Kim Rodick for Best Vocalist; and the Singing Slovenes for Culture and Heritage. Four side musicians received awards: Mark Habat (Fred Ziwich and the International Sound Machine), Phil Hrvatin (Joey Tomsick Orchestra), Brian O'Boyle (Jack Tady Orchestra and Klancnik and Friends), and Frank Okicki (Bob Kravos and the Boys in the Band).

Members also chose two all-time hits songs, "Terezinka," a polka standard adapted from an old Slovenian folk melody, and "Save the Last Dance," a romantic waltz written by the late bandleader Lojze Slak of Slovenia, which became popular abroad with English lyrics by Cecilia Dolgan.

Nine entertainers were added to the Polka Hall of Fame Trustees Honor Roll: accordionist Linda Lee Brown; drummers Gus Oswald and John R. Gerl; bandleaders Ray Skovenski and the late Al Strukel; vocalist Angela Zabjek; and the three long-time members of the Art Perko Orchestra, Mike Dragas, Ray Sterle and Bill Tomsick.

The National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame was founded in 1987 by musicians and leaders of Slovenian and ethnic organizations. The museum traces the story of the city's home-grown sound from its roots in the old Slovenian neighborhoods to nationwide popularity with audio exhibits, historic photographs and original instruments, including an accordion belonging to Frank Yankovic, America's Polka King. The archive preserves 6,000 vintage recordings, some dating back a century. Each year, the organization's 1,500 members vote for best album and top musicians by category. The Polka Hall of Fame's Awards Show celebrates this style of American dance music.

The Polka Hall of Fame and Museum is located at 605 East 222nd Street in Euclid, Ohio, in the historic former Euclid City Hall. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, noon to 5:00, and Saturdays, 10:00 to 3:00. Admission is free. Polka recordings are on sale on-line and in the museum store. As a nonprofit organization, the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum relies on fundraising and memberships. For more information, call (216) 261-FAME, toll-free (866) 66-POLKA, or check Facebook or the website, [www.polkafame.com](http://www.polkafame.com). ###

-- Joe Valencic