



by Rob Hambrecht

Do The Buzz Polka



Guy Klucevsek and the Ain't Notbin' But A Polka Band

PHOTO BY STEVE SPELIOTIS

Polka. The very word connotes an image of an uncool fat kid with a screechy accordion playing a Lawrence Welk favorite on an amateur show. In fact, that very stereotype restrained composer/musician Guy Klucevsek for many years from developing the music he performed at the "Polka From The Fringe" concert at the Brooklyn Academy Of Music. "'Serious' composition study at the college level put an extended halt to my life as a polka musician: getting the accordion, and myself, taken seriously in that environment meant avoiding music that reinforced accordion stereotypes" states the forty-one year old Klucevsek. Through the discovery of other kinds of music that used the accordion such as Tex-Mex and Cajun (with musicians like the late accordion great Clifton Chenier), Klucevsek composed his first polka in twenty years.

After his two decade hiatus, Klucevsek has taken his favorite childhood music and experimented, changed, and twisted it into a new, more socially acceptable, and musically expressive form. What Guy Klucevsek has done with the polka is to arrange, compose, and perform modern classical music and jazz with either a polka base or flavor.

He's invited other composers, like John Zorn and Lois V. Vierk to try their hand at polka compositions.

Compositions like Joseph Kasinskas's "Peek-A-Boo Polka" contain musical double entendres. Polka rhythms and melodies play hide and seek with classical and jazz forms in Kasinskas' work, which exudes a musically based humor—kind of like a more sophisticated version of seventies classical music comedian P.D.Q. Bach. But Fred Frith's "The Disinformation Polka" is a serious modern work more reminiscent of Revel than of a classical music spoof. Using the polka as a vehicle, the various composers can experiment and take the polka in any direction they choose. Guy Klucevsek's superb arranging and performing talents allow for him to render any work with sensitivity, humor, or as a straight polka.

Klucevsek made the audience appreciate the polka and the expressive possibilities it, or any other kind of music hold.

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One of the most unlikely sources for world beat consciousness would have to be

MTV. After pioneering the music video industry, MTV limited the airplay of innovative bands that had any acute visual sense, by formatting programs that generally featured heavy profit (oops! I mean heavy metal) bands who completely misunderstood the possibilities of video. Those groups usually focused cameras on their faces or crotches for half the clip and panned a giant audience with the other half. The result: an incredibly degenerate display of ego that appeals to teenage boys and girls with skin problems.

But MTV is still the biggest station for music videos, and producer Mark Pellington has done nothing less than to reanimate the music video with his new program, *Buzz*.

The fast moving half-hour show bombards the viewer with visual images and ideas designed to give a vision of universality. Not exclusively a music show, *Buzz* includes advertisements from Japan, India, and Jamaica; a two minute segment on William S. Burroughs; and even a quick pot-pourri segment devoted to world beat bands such as Toure Kunda and the Bhundu Boys. There are man-in-the-street interviews from Germany and Australia on light topics like nuclear war, as well as quick conversations with musicians like Bruce Springsteen. More than simple armchair travel, *Buzz* finds a common ground for people to relate on—despite language barriers or political borders. Everyone shares a stock of pop images which entertain and make people think.

As of this writing, *Buzz* has not been scheduled on a regular basis. Because of what it is (a half hour collection of practically anything relevant to exciting culture) the internationally-shown program will probably become popular overseas long before it builds a cult following in the U.S.. Like *Bladerunner*, *Buzz*'s melange of pop culture entertainment with artistic statement will probably be appreciated by select connoisseurs. I hope *Buzz* gets the recognition it deserves. Enough people have become saturated with the gyrations of two-bit Led Zeppelins to allow the music video to progress once more in a meaningful direction.

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