THE ACCORDION

by

Toni Charuhas

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Dedicated to

SYLVIA KAPLOWITZ

A constant source of inspiration and encouragement throughout my musical career.

FOREWORD

The enthusiastic accordionist and music lover who desires additional information on the origin and development of the instrument will find this book both instructive and enlightening. As a "first" it will make an indelible mark on the accordion pages of history which are to follow.

Why no one has ever before thought of publishing such a treatise is hard to tell. Perhaps our own faith has been lacking; however, there is no doubt that this has been a very widely needed publication in the field of accordion.

PIETRO DEIRO, JR.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The modern piano accordion is rapidly making great strides in the legitimate musical world. Once only a novelty instrument played at square dances, in taverns and social occasions, it is now heard in concert halls and symphony orchestras and it is accepted in conservatories, universities and schools. Just as there can be no comparison between the first crude water organ of yesterday and the magnificent pipe organ of today, so there can be no comparison between the first clumsy accordion of the early nineteenth century and the rich and sensitive instrument now in existence. It took many years for the organ to develop; the accordion as such, is a newcomer to the musical field although, relatively speaking, it has had a tremendous growth and development in a very short time. In spite of the fact that in its present state it is a complete and satisfying solo instrument, its manufacturers are constantly seeking to improve and perfect it. Before discussing the present day accordion let us turn back the pages of time and trace it to its origin.

One might be under the impression that since the accordion is such a new instrument its history could not date back very far, at most perhaps a little over a century. This is not so, for the free reed, which is the chief distinguishing feature of the accordion, dates back to centuries before Christ. Other features of the accordion such as its bellows, its keyboard, its push-buttons and its portability may be traced to different eras in antiquity. In order to get a complete pic-

ture of the accordion it is necessary to trace the inception and evolution of each of its components.

The seed from which the accordion was eventually to evolve is to be found in the cheng. This is an ancient Chinese instrument which dates back to mythical times in China. Louis C. Elson in his book "Curiosities of Music" tells us that the invention of music is ascribed by the Chinese to supernatural beings and that the Emperor Chi-hoang-che, who reigned in the time of the spirits is said to have invented the rules of pronunciation, the written characters of the Chinese language, and finally music. A mythological character named Tong-how composed the earliest songs.

Kai-tien-chi, the 9th emperor of this spiritual dynasty, is credited with many of the earliest songs. He is also said to have invented 8 kinds of instruments.

All this is based on mythology, however, and the authentic history of Chinese music may be said to begin with Fo-hi (or Fuh-hi), the first of the Ty dynasty, and the founder of the Chinese empire. He reigned about 2950 B.C.

Many Chinese writers attribute some of the inventions, which are credited to Fo-hi, to his wife Niu-va (or Nu-wo), a supernatural and mythical female sovereign who was regarded as a holy and miraculous virgin in Chinese annals.

The Chinese have from antiquity classed musical sounds into 8 categories and believed that nature had formed 8 kinds of sonorous bodies with which to produce these sounds. These sounds are those produced from skin, stone, metal, baked clay, wood, silk bamboo and the calabash. The cheng belongs to the latter. The calabash is a species of gourd, pumpkin-shaped but smaller. In the cheng the calabash (called pao by the Chinese) really emits no sound, but serves only as an air reservoir for this instrument. The

cheng is in fact a portable organ and quite an intricate instrument. It is astonishing that this instrument, invented about 4,000 years ago, did not lead to greater results in all that time.

The Cheng

The cheng was made in the shape of a Phoenix. The Chinese considered the Phoenix the emperor of birds and believed it presided over the southern quadrant of the heavens. It symbolized sun and warmth. The colors of the feathers of this vermilion bird are named after the 5 cardinal virtues, the tail is graduated like Pandean pipes, and the song of this mythical creature resembles the music of the instrument. The length of the tubes on the cheng is simply arbitrary and intended to produce a symmetrical appearance and not in obedience to acoustic laws.

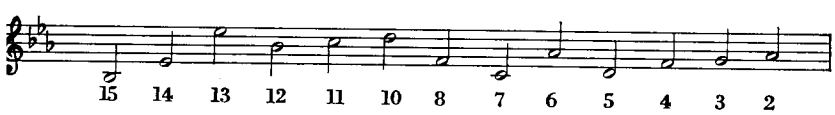
There are many legends, symbols and mythological stories attached to the cheng. Animal, mineral and vegetable nature is represented by it, and to each part of it is appended some mystical meaning. Dr. Eastlake, an authority on Chinese music tells us that according to the Erh-ya (an ancient dictionary of terms) and the Shuo-wen (a dictionary published 100 A.D.) there were two distinct forms of the cheng; the largest and probably more ancient, known as the chaou (bird's nest), and the smaller known as the

ho (concord). The scale of these two instruments must have been different, as the one had up to 19 and the other 13 reeds. The cheng consists of 3 separate parts, the gourd, the mouthpiece and the tubes or pipes. In shape the gourd is very much like a tea-cup and about as large. It is (sometimes) perforated at the base and inlaid with a small piece of bone or ivory, also perforated. (Nowadays the cheng is made of wood and is lacquered.)

The mouthpiece consists of 2 separate parts, the mouthpiece proper, made of wood, lacquered and inserted into the gourd at about ¾ inch above the base and a bone or ivory plate which covers the free end.

The gourd is pierced and cleaned and an aperture made for the air to enter, then the ends of the pipes of bamboo are inserted into holes cut in the gourd; each of these pipes contains in it a tongue of copper or gold, the vibration of which causes the sound; beneath this is a hole cut in the bamboo, through which the air rushes without giving any sound, but when the hole is stopped by pressing a finger upon it, the air having no other outlet is forced up the pipe, and striking the metallic tongue, gives out an agreeable free reed sound. A curved mouthpiece through which the performer blows is introduced at the center of the gourd.

By a gentle movement of the instrument a beautiful trill is produced, which combines with the harmonies of the larger sets and gives the organ shake in miniature. The notes are about half a tone below concert pitch, the lowest note being very nearly B flat of the alto clef; pipe 14 gives the note E flat and the scale is that of 3 flats. The following diagram will illustrate the arrangement of the pipes.



In the above described cheng there are 17 pipes in all. Every pipe, except the non-sounding, or mute, 1, 9, 16 and 17, is composed of two pieces; the upper part bamboo, the lower part of some hard word, probably teak.

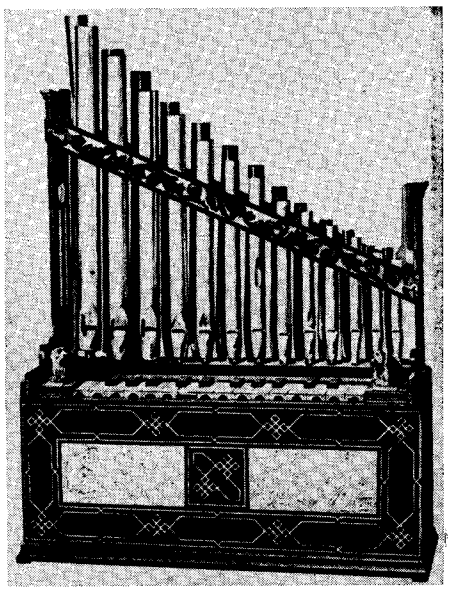
The reeds of the cheng are rudely fastened in with wax. Every pipe, except the mute ones, has a slit on the inner side which serves to modify or intensify its tone.

It has been asserted that the cheng was brought over to Europe about the 15th century by some Jesuit missionaries, but this has not been determined. To date it is not surely known how or quite when the cheng arrived in Europe. However, it is recorded that in the 18th century, Mr. Johann Wilde, known as the inventor of the nail violin, purchased or was given, a cheng in St. Petersburg, Russia and learned to play it. When the physicist Kratzenstein, from Copenhagen, heard him and examined the free reed of the cheng, he suggested to the organ builder Kirschnik in St. Petersburg, that he introduce the free reed into the organ. The latter, however, made no organ with free reeds. He only made organ-pianos. It was Georg Joseph Vogler, well-known in Darmstadt, who built the first organ with such reeds. The real value, however, of free reeds does not seem to have been appreciated until Grènie of Paris, in 1810, discarded the pipes and used the reeds alone, thus inventing the harmonium. A great family of free reed instruments then began to appear, such as mouth harmonicas, concertinas and accordions.

Before going into the 19th century with its invention of the accordion, let us see what other phases of the accordion were in previous use. The bellows, one such phase, may be traced to many years B.C. and were used in Greek and Egyptian forges.

At Paros there is still in use a pair of bellows answer-

ing to Virgil's description (see footnote). It consisted of two sheepskins, united by an iron pipe, introduced into the fire, which were alternately dilated with air and compressed by an Arab slave, who knelt above them.



THE PORTATIVE

Pneumatic organs of simple form are said to have been used by the monks of the 4th and 5th centuries. In the 8th century an organ presented to Pepin by the Byzantine Emperor was placed in the Church of St. Cornelius, Compiegne, France, and Charlemagne placed an organ presented to him by Haroun Al Raschid in the Church of Aix-la- Chapelle, about 826.

"As when the Cyclops urge on the thunderbolts from the stubborn masses, some receive and render back the air in the bull-hide bellows; some dip the sputtering brass in the trough, Aetna groans under the weight of their anvils: they alternately with vast force lift their arms in time and turn the iron with the gripping pincers."—Virgil, 69 B.C. Georgics, Book lv, line 170.

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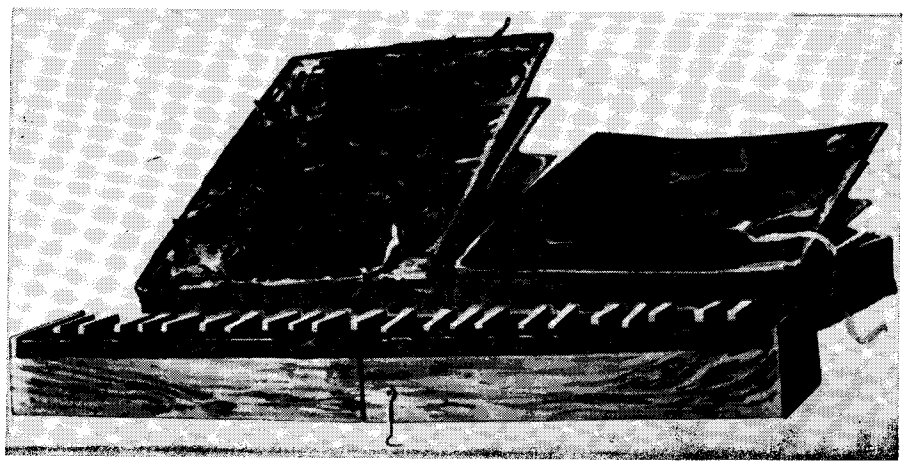
In the Middle Ages there were two predominant portable instruments, the portative and the regal, both of which can be related to the accordion family. In Europe the portative made its first recorded appearance in England during the 12th century and by the 13th century it was distributed all over Western Europe, becoming one of the most important elements in both chamber and orchestral music. Its popularity was no accident, for quite apart from the clearer, pure, mellow tones, which would have singular attraction for Renaissance ears, it was remarkable for its technical efficiency, while thanks to its keyboard mechanism it was remarkably easy to play. The portative was a small, portable, and easily playable hand-organ. It was strapped on to the player who operated the lever keys or small push-buttons, with his right and worked the bellows with his left hand. It was equipped with anywhere from 6 to 30 pipes in one, two or three ranks. The portatives were built with two ranks of keys only to save space, since at that time they had no chromatic scale. Later, in the Renaissance, it invariably was provided with a regular chromatic keyboard furnished with two ranks of keys, and producing all the notes of the chromatic scale. In spite of its improvements the portative was on its way out, for it was too small, feeble in tone and unsuitable for chord playing to be used in the new Renaissance music. When we reach the Baroque and Roccoco periods we find the portatives in use principally in processions. The portatives have become incomparably heavier and two or more persons are required to serve them. The added weight stems mostly from the fact that registers were added to them.

And now let us take a look at the regal. The regal is the instrument from which the modern harmonium was modeled, but it had beating reeds instead of free reeds. The

beating reed, which is employed in the organ, derives its name from the fact that the reeds touch the sides of the frames. It was introduced in the 15th century but it is not known whether it appeared first in the regal or as part of an organ. References have been made to the regal being used in convents to accompany the singing of nuns.



THE BIBLE-REGAL

The regal received the name bible-regal in the 16th century when Georg Voll of Nuremberg adapted its shape to the form of a bible-like book when closed. The bible-regal had twin bellows which could be taken off and folded up. In order to make it easy to transport, the folded instrument was packed into the bellows and the closed instrument gave an appearance of a Bible. The bible-regal was an instrument well calculated to delight and gratify the people of the 16th century, who were inclined to be enthralled and fascinated by unique mechanical wonders.

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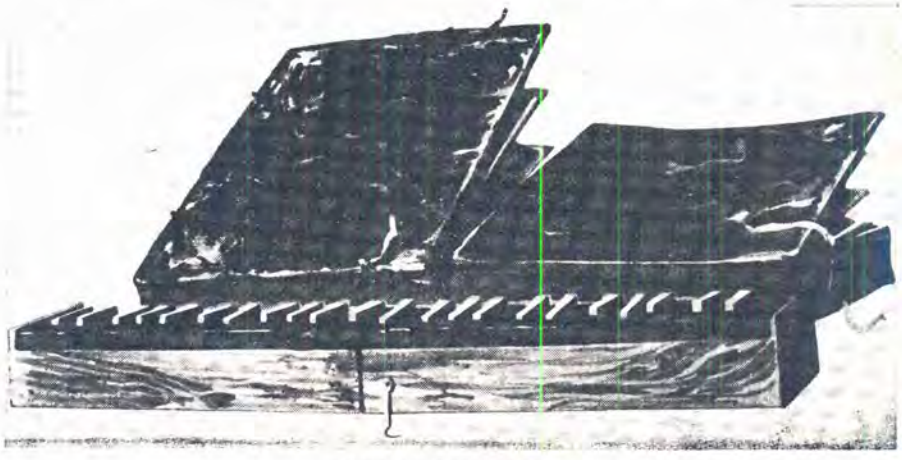

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The regal was employed in the 17th century chiefly as an instrument for the execution of the thorough-bass. It was peculiarly fitted to accompany a choir of trombones,

on account of its powerful, snarling tone. The regal was included in the score of Peri's opera of Eurydice, produced in 1600. In this opera, Apollo, when he sang, was accompanied on the regal — an early attempt to give a sort of colour-tone to his utterances. Such a device was afterwards employed by Spontini, Mozart, Meyerbeer, Wagner, and other opera composers. Monteverdi (1567-1643), popular composer of that period, used the regal in his opera "Orfeo" which was orchestrated for 36 instruments and which is said to have embodied what are still regarded as new conceptions in opera. The 18th century with its love for the sentimental, took exception to the rigid, harsh and unaccommodating tone of the regal. Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) who composed, collected musical biographies and wrote on theory, particularly disliked the regal which he described with characteristic bluntness, as "extremely loathesome." Thus, the regal was not destined to survive beyond the middle of the 18th century.

In short, we can see that before the 18th century there were three ancestral instruments of the accordion. The cheng and the accordion owe their relationship to each other through the fact that their sound is produced by a reed which vibrates freely. The difference is, that in one the air is created by the human lungs and in the other by the action of a bellows. The relationship of the accordion to the portative lies in that both are strapped to the player, and the left hand in both operates bellows, while the right hand operates keys or buttons. Their difference lies in the fact that the portative has pipes while the accordion has free reeds. The regal and the accordion are related inasmuch as they both are reed instruments; but the regal has the beating reed while the accordion has the free reed.

Both have in common bellows and a keyboard. Music on both the regal and the portative is created by the right hand only. On the accordion it is created with both hands. The accordion, portative and regal have bellows and all three are portable, in that respect, as cousins often do, they outwardly resemble one another. Here their resemblance ends and we find a closer relation in the accordion's true ancestor, the cheng; for regardless of how the wind on either instrument is produced, the outcome is the sound that can only be created by the vibration of a *free reed.* This sound differs widely from that produced by other types of reeds, having a unique beauty of its own.

Europe in the 18th century experienced a wave of free reed instruments. There were the mouth-blown harmonica, symphonium and aeolina; the stationary harmonium, melodeon and seraphine; and the hand-bellowsed accordion, concertina, rocking melodian (or lap organ). Also there was the melophone. This differed from the others. It was held on the right thigh, stopped by the left hand and the air was pumped in by the right "handle." The handle was called the "bow" (archet) in France. The reason for this name was that the air chamber was small and the sound lasted only as long as the handle was moved. The handle could move in either direction. One of the peculiarities of this instrument's bowing technique was the possibility of a tremolo effect which could be produced with the same rapidity as on any bowed instrument. Therefore the term "bow" as applied to the handle was quite appropriate. Although the melophone was superseded by the harmonium, the latter could not produce a tremolo. The sound of the melophone is similar to that of the accordion but somewhat stronger and in certain parts of the register sounds like a trumpet.

In June 1829, a distinguished Englishman, Sir Charles Wheatstone, the inventor of the electric telegraph, took out a patent for the concertina. Owing to the acoustic laws governing the vibration of free reeds, the concertina could be played with perfect expression, pianos, or fortes being obtained simply by varying the pressure of the air upon the reed. This made it an instrument for an artist to play upon, and it so happened that three remarkable men came to the front and performed on it concertos with orchestral accompaniment. Sonatas and quite ambitious concerted music, specially written for the instrument by Molique, Sir George Macfarren, Messrs. George Case, Silas, Ciulio Regondi, and Richard Blagrove, showed what the instrument was capable of doing in classical music; their fine playing and influence did much to cause the concertina to be regarded with respect by musicians.

The accordion was a contemporary instrument of the concertina. Some dictionaries attribute the invention of the accordion to Cyrillus Damian of Vienna in 1829. But authorities and the concensus of opinion is that it was first built in 1822 by Friedrich Buschmann of Berlin, and was called the handaoline.

The first accordion was awkward and heavy. Because of the unique principle of the left hand single bass buttons producing fixed chords it was named accordion by the above mentioned Damian. This early and rather crude accordion had an oblong form and had four bass buttons. Each button acted on two reeds and encompassed one octave in the diatonic scale. These buttons were so arranged that each note could be accompanied by a tonic or dominant harmony. Later, with the addition of the chromatic scale, the instrument was capable of a more varied melody and harmony. In the beginning, the accordion operated

on the same principle as the harmonica, that is, it played one tone when air was drawn in and another when air was blown out. That type of accordion was and still is known as a semi-tone, or diatonic accordion. However, the use of this system is nowadays restricted to a few folk instruments. Now the accordion plays the same tone whether the bellows are being opened or closed.

In the 19th century various European instrument manufacturers began to make accordions. As a result many different systems of key orders were evolved, such as the Dutch, French, German, Italian, Russian, etc.

The German type of accordion, known also as a melodeon, had up to four registers and had, as a rule, two basses and one row of ten treble keys. Later it had two rows of 19 treble keys and four basses. The early Italian type had four basses with one row of ten treble keys or two rows of approximately 21 treble keys with eight basses. This type had no registers. Both the German and Italian types were also made in chromatic tuning and from these instruments developed the chromatic accordion.

The chromatic accordion had three rows of treble buttons. Modern chromatic button accordions can possess 102 treble buttons in five banks giving a range of five octaves — rows four and five duplicating rows one and two respectively to allow alternative fingering.

The bass section of the accordion was being developed and from one fundamental bass row (single tones) and major chord row, other rows were added until we have our present standard bass keyboard which has, besides the two rows mentioned, a row of minor chords, a row of seventh chords, a row of diminished chords and an added row of single tones called the counter-bass row. There are also 140 bass accordions with an added minor counter bass

row. To this 140 bass may be added a row of augmented chords forming a 160 bass accordion. Both these types are in use by some, but the 120 bass accordion is the standard.

It is interesting to note that while all these developments were taking place in Europe with respect to free reed instruments, America too, had her share in the form of melodians, rocking melodians and seraphines. On a rocking melodian found in Concord, New Hampshire, dating back to about 1835 was found a label in which the instrument was referred to as a "melodian" and which reads:

> ABRAHAM PRESCOTT — Manufacturer of PREMIUM BASS & DOUBLE BASS VIOLS — Seraphines and Melodians and dealer in Musical Instruments, Umbrellas, Parasols, &c. Instruments and Umbrellas repaired at short notice, and WARRANTED - OPPOSITE THE COLUMBIAN HOTEL, CONCORD, New Hampshire. (Care should be taken in blowing the Melodian to give a steady pressure, as a sudden motion may injure the tone of the instruments.)

It can readily be seen that to present a complete picture of the evolution of the accordion family of instruments would be a tremendous undertaking and one far too enormous in scope to be encompassed in one volume.

Even today there exist several types of accordions. In Europe the chromatic accordion is still in use, although it is rapidly being overtaken by the piano accordion. At present the most popular and widely used and manufactured accordion is the piano accordion and it is with this type that we will concern ourselves.

Although the first piano accordion originated in Europe during the second half of the 19th century it did not appear in America until 1909. At this time Pietro Deiro introduced his improved piano accordion and was the first to play one before a public audience. This historical event

occurred at the Washington Square Theatre in San Francisco. In 1910 commercial manufacture of accordions commenced but they were not produced by mass production methods until approximately 1918.

It is a well known fact that we owe the improvement of the piano keyboard as it exists on the piano accordion today to Pietro Deiro. He improved the accordion piano keyboard by enlarging the keys in both length and width. Originally the keys were quite narrow and were 2½ to 3 inches in length.

As we view our present piano accordion we find it far removed from the primitive, crude instrument first invented and called an accordion. It is no longer cumbersome and clumsy to play. The accordion of today is fast becoming accepted as an instrument of true value and merit and we find, as a result of its new found prestige, that several contemporary composers already have written concertos for accordion and orchestra, some of which have been performed by a number of our great symphony orchestras.

The accordion is truly an instrument worthy of consideration and recognition as we shall see as we go on further to discuss its merits and possibilities.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT DAY ACCORDION ITS MANUFACTURE AND CONSTRUCTION

1. ITS MANUFACTURE

Italy today is recognized as the center of accordion manufacturing for the entire world. In the province of Ancona, which is located halfway down the Adriatic coast of Italy one may find a thriving center of accordion production. As a matter of fact, the manufacturing of accordions is virtually the sole industry of the many small villages which dot the province of Ancona.

In one of these small towns named Castelfidardo accordions were manufactured as far back as 1870. In 1872 Paolo Soprani began making accordions there. There are at least 22 accordion factories located in this town of 11,000 population. Almost everyone, old and young alike, in Castelfidardo is connected with accordion building and the craft is passed down from generation to generation.

Castelfidardo is a picturesque and fascinating town. Among the many factories in Castelfidardo can be found eight large ones. It is these factories that supply about 90% of the town's production.

Germany also produces accordions. The best known German manufacturing center is located in the town of Trossingen. Although they manufacture accordions extensively, they have a world-wide reputation for making harmonicas, their principle product.

In the United States fine accordions are also manufactured but the output is relatively small in comparison to

that of Italy and Germany. The American factories are found principally in and around New York City, Chicago, Detroit and San Francisco.

The accordion today is one of the largest selling instruments in the musical world. According to statistics more than 125,000 accordions are imported from Italy alone during an average year, and the lira value of these accordions places them third in rank among all Italian exports. For an instrument which has only comparatively recently received wide public attention, these figures are astonishing. The reasons for the steadily increasing popularity of the accordion may, however, be guessed at. A prime consideration is the very nature of the instrument. Its full, vibrant satisfying sound; its almost violin-like intimacy in being played close to the body, and its ready portability are the important considerations. Another large factor in its favor is the encouraging ease with which the beginner can produce impressive musical results. This has served to endow the accordion student with a steadfastness which is the envy of all other music teachers. And lastly, are the few pioneers whose devoted efforts first helped bring the accordion to a large public audience. Brief biographies of these men appear in the appendix of this book, and it is well to remember that but for them the accordion might today still be a novelty. A recent census conducted by the American Music Conference discloses that approximately 1,500,000 persons play the accordion in the United States.

II. Its Construction

The accordion is made up of three sections, the treble keyboard, the bellows and the bass keyboard. (See page 73.)

A. The treble section is comprised of the following parts:

1. The treble reed box (page 73) which is made of wood covered with various colored plastic. Above and below this casing are brackets to which are fastened the shoulder straps.

2. Keys and keyboard: The key (chromatic-key or piano-key, see treble key and valve assembly) is joined by an axle to a valve or pallet (fig. 5). This valve rests snugly against the round or square holes of the valve plate (fig. 6). When the keys are depressed the valves are lifted away from the openings allowing air to flow into the reed chambers and creating a tone. The valves are faced with leather. In the piano accordion they are arranged in two rows, the outer row for the white keys and the inner row (towards the keyboard) for the black keys. In order to ensure a quick return of the depressed valve to its original position against the valve plate, springs (fig. 9) are placed under each key. The number of keys vary in different sizes of accordions but the standard number is forty-one ranging from F below middle C to A above high C, a total of 24 white keys and 17 black keys. To hold all these keys in position there is a keyboard axle (fig. 11) running through them lengthwise.

3. Over the rods and valves there is a covering, sometimes called the treble cover but more often called the Grill. It is made of thick plastic or coated aluminum and is fretted and gauze lined. This grill, by means of design, is used to distinguish the various

makes of accordion. There are many designs and styles of grill, some simple and some elaborate. The registers (to be discussed further later in this chapter) are to be found on the grill. The true function of this covering is to protect the rods and pallets and also to prevent dust from entering the reeds.

4. The valve plate which lies between the valves and the reedblock is usually made of plywood or aluminum. It has round or square holes each of which allows air to flow into a separate tone chamber in the reed block.

5. The reed bed (fig. 4) is a long piece of wood. running lengthwise with cut out tone chambers which are separated by wooden walls. The top of the reed bed is solid and the cut out chambers fit on to the valve plate. Over each chamber is fitted a reedplate (fig. 1) which contains two steel tongues (fig. 3) one on each side of the reedplate. These tongues are rivetted onto the base of the reedplate and fit into a precision cut slot in the plate. In this way they are free to vibrate. Both tongues are of the same pitch, one vibrating when the bellows are drawn open and the other when the bellows are pushed closed. There is a strip of leather attached with a special glue to the reedplate (fig. 2) which covers the entire slot. One strip of leather is on the outside of the plate over one slot and the other on the inside over the other slot. When the bellows are drawn the leather covering the outer-slot of the reedplate automatically closes with the pressure of the air so that only the inner reed tongue

can vibrate freely. Upon closing the bellows the leather on the opposite side responds permitting the outer reed tongue to vibrate. There are as much as four reedplates for each tone. These are for the registers (sometimes called stops, shifts, switches or couplers). The size and thickness of the reed gives it its pitch and the kind of steel or metal, its quality. The slide which closes or opens various reeds for combinations is imbedded in the valve plate.

6. The bellows fasteners (strapettes) are metal mesh straps or metal bars attached to the treble casing crossing over the bellows (when closed) to hook or snap onto the casing of the bass section thereby locking the accordion shut. The accordion is always kept locked in this manner when not in use. Occasionally an accordion may be found that does not close by metal bar bellows fasteners, having instead a button at the top of the bass casing which when turned operates an internal catch locking the bellows shut.

5. The Bellows:

1. The bellows folds (see page 73) are made of strong pleated fibre. The pleats are covered with linen, foil or strong paper, the outer edges are overlaid with leatherette strips.

2. Metal corners ensure strength and durability.

3. Soft leather gussets in each corner of the bellows allow elasticity.

4. Wooden frames at each end fit into the treble and bass casing and are made airtight with leather packing. They are secured with bellows pins. Some models have invisible frame clips.

C. The bass section (see Bass Mechanism)

1. Bass Reed Box is made of the same material as the treble casing.

2. Bass strap of padded leather. The player slips his left hand through this strap so that his wrist rests firmly against it. Thus he opens and closes the bellows with his wrist and arm and leaves his fingers free to play the bass buttons. The bass handstrap is adjustable to suit the different players.

3. Along the side of the bass casing under the bass handstrap is a panel called the bass panel. It is made of covered plywood. It has various openings which are gauze-lined.

4. Bass mechanism. Containing approximately 3,000 parts, the bass mechanism of the accordion has complexities which, when viewed by a non-mechanical mind, seem to have as many intricate parts as an open adding machine. Its operation, however, is fairly simple if we bear in mind that there are two sections to the bass mechanism; the first part consists of the bass solos (fundamental and counter-basses) which operate single reeds alone or in octaves. When a button is depressed, it raises a valve similar to the one on the right hand, which allows air to flow into the reeds and produce the tone. The second part of the bass mechanism consists of bass chords (harmony). This is really the complex

part since each button when depressed plays a complete chord. For example, when the button "C" is depressed, it will play the single notes, "C," "E" and "G" by raising three valves at one time. It is the formation of these combinations which require the extensive mechanism.

If we refer to the bass mechanism illustration on page 73 we can best follow the operation. Each note of the scale is opened by a bass valve (fig. 16). Each of these valves is operated by a Fulcrum Rod (fig. 13) which extends the entire length of the bass box so that it can be operated by any of the piston rods (fig. 14). The piston rod engages the proper Fulcrum Pinions (fig. 12) which open the proper combination of valves to form the chord.

5. Separating the bass valves from the bass reed blocks is a valve plate similar to the one on the treble side of the accordion.

6. At the top of the bass panel may be found the air-release button (fig. 17). This button is attached to a valve resting on the valve plate. When pressed the valve uncovers an air hole and allows the bellows to open or shut without producing a tone.

   Many of today's professional accordionists have adopted one of Pietro Deiro's first improvements, the "air bar." This is a bar which replaces the air release button on the accordion. Its design is to facilitate its use without the necessity of leaving the bass keyboard to reach the unhandy button to release air. Its main function is to provide a finer Bellows control so that it is possible to conclude renditions of music with the bellows closed,

giving the same finished effect that a violinist gives with his closing down bow. The bar extends along the edge of the bass board part that is under the bass strap thus being close to the buttons. In this manner it passes almost directly under the palm of the hand. By use of the thumb, it is possible to manipulate the bar so that it will release either a small amount of air or a large amount in order to provide Bellows control. Many of today's accordionists use this bar, especially when about to enter into an attack or to prepare the Bellows in a proper position for a Bellows shake.

7. It may be well to mention at this time that bellows control is probably one of the most important requisites of a good player. Its manipulation may be compared to the bow of the violin wherein it is used to produce the proper phrasing, attacks and special effects. One of the important inimitable effects produced by bellows action is the "Bellows Shake." This is accomplished by means of opening and closing the bellows in short sharp movements while holding notes in the right hand. In this manner it is possible to play detached, rapid, consecutive notes producing a bowing effect. Many books have been written on the subject of Bellows control.

8. The bellows should never be opened or closed unless a key or button is being depressed or the air release button or bar used, for the air pressure created inside by not allowing the air to escape in some manner can easily force the bellows. The bellows should be completely air tight, for leaky

bellows, by not permitting enough air to get into the tone chambers, create a strain on the player and do not allow him to have complete control of his accordion.

The treble section of the piano accordion, as we have previously noted, is made up of keys such as those found in the keyboards of pianos. The key action of this keyboard has a greater similarity to that of the organ than that of the piano. The spring in each key makes the key respond to the slightest touch. As in the case of the organ the weight of the finger has no effect on the tone produced while in piano playing it does. Should the accordionist wish a heavy or light action the spring can be adjusted to increase or decrease the speed of the keys, thereby changing the action. Because of the mechanism of the keyboard, accordion keys should be depressed firmly by a light touch rather than by the percussive touch used for piano. In this way the valve opens immediately and the reed vibrates fully. A gradual pressing of the key only serves to allow the air to seep slowly into the reed starting a slow vibration which increases as the valve lifts higher. It can be noted that jazz accordionists sometimes use this latter touch to produce a varied effect, especially on the basses.

The *actual written* range of the accordion is from F below middle C to A three and one-half octaves above. However, due to the different sets of reeds in an accordion the range is increased by two actaves giving an F one octave lower than the lowest F and an A one to two octaves higher than the highest A on the keyboard. The standard tuning pitch of the accordion is A-440.

The *standard* accordion has four sets of reeds in the

treble. There are some with fewer reeds in order to be lighter and less expensive.

The four sets of reeds are as follows:

1. The low or bassoon reed. This reed sounds an octave lower than written. Its quality is quite mellow and is even more so when constructed inside a tone chamber. It responds slowly in its lower reeds because of the largness of the reed tongues on those tones. In combination with the higher reeds it produces an exceptionally rich tone.

2. The next set of reeds is known as the middle reed. This set sounds exactly as written. Used alone it has a sweet and pleasing sound. It responds more quickly than the bassoon reed.

3. The third set also is a middle reed set and sounds as written. It differs from the other middle reed set inasmuch as it is tuned slightly sharp. This is done for the sake of brilliance. It is called the vibrato reed. When playing with other instruments it is well to avoid this reed unless its special effect is wanted.

4. The fourth set of reeds is known as the piccolo or ottavino reed. It sounds an octave higher than written and has a thin, reedy and small sound. At the high end of the keyboard it has the same register as the harmonics on a violin. Alone, the high reeds are useful in soft passages and for special effect. When used in combination with the three other sets of reeds this high reed is overwhelmed to the point where it is hardly noticed.

For a picture of the range of these reeds see page 76.

To use these reeds singly and in combinations, registers are pressed. These registers are connected to a bar which shuts or opens the holes leading to a set of reeds. If all the holes are shut except those leading to the high reed, then only the high reeds will sound and so on with all the other sets of reeds. If the accordionist desired a combination of high and low reeds, he would press the two middle, thus shutting them off and allowing only the high and low reeds to sound. Today, however, the acordionist does not have to make his combinations, for the modern multi-shift accordion automatically combines itself when the different registers are pressed.

These registers are almost always located on the grill of the accordion and are in different shapes and sizes according to make or style of the instrument. The master register (page 73) (the one opening all reed sets) is usually found along the edge of the keyboard making it easily accessible from all playing positions. When this master register is pressed and all reeds sound, it is known as full accordion.

The agreed names for the registers are master, bassoon, accordion, harmonium, bandoneon, organ, oboe, celeste (or musette), violin, clarinet and piccolo, etc. (see chart on page 75.)

In indicating which reeds are to be used, there has been considerable controversy in the past, but now in the present, standardization is being realized. However, it may be well to be familiar with the other systems should one obtain music that has been published not too recently. For this purpose these are illustrated on page 75, along with the standard system.

We now come to the more complicated section of the accordion, the bass section. The Standard piano accordion has the Stradella bass system. This system has 120 bass but-

tons arranged in diagonal rows of six across. From top to bottom there are 20 buttons in each of these rows of six. (See page 77). The first row of 20 buttons, that nearest the bellows, is called the counter-bass row; the second, the fundamental row; the third, the major chord row; the fourth, the minor chord row; the fifth, the seventh chord row; and the sixth, the diminished row.

Counting up ten buttons from the bottom of the accordion in the fundamental row we arrive at a button which is the note C. This button may have a bright little stone in it, or may be indented or marked in some manner so as to distinguish it and make it feel different from the other 119 buttons. It is a landmark from which the accordionist moves into the maze of buttons above and below it. All this moving is done by touch since the player cannot see his left hand. Some accordionists mark a few other buttons such as the Ab below and E above the marked C to help guide them.

The button in the major chord row (the third row) next to the fundamental C is a C major chord. In other words, when this button is pressed a mechanism inside of the accordion acts in such a manner as to produce a C major triad. Thus the accordionist can play a whole chord by just pressing one button. Diagonally next to this C major chord in the minor chord row we find a C minor chord button which sounds the C minor triad. In the next row is a C seventh chord with the fifth of the chord omitted (for the purpose of playing altered chords) and in the last row a C diminished chord also with the fifth omitted.

Above the C fundamental button is found the G fundamental button with its diagonal row of major, minor, seventh and diminished chords. This order of a fundamental button with its own row of major, minor, seventh and diminished chords is found up and down the whole bass

section. In other words, if one memorizes the twenty buttons in the fundamental row then one automatically has memorized all the 80 buttons in the major, minor, seventh and diminished rows, leaving only the counter-bass row to be memorized. All in all there are only 40 buttons to remember, those of the fundamental row and those of the counter-bass row.

Once the fundamental row is memorized the counter-bass row is relatively easy to learn for it is arranged in the same letter order as the fundamental bass.

Let us look at this main row of fundamental basses and see how it is arranged. Starting from our guide button C we travel to the button above it and find it is a G, an interval of a fifth from C. The button above the G is D, again an interval of a fifth. In like order we proceed in fifths until we reach the top of the accordion. Proceeding from our main C downwards we also move in fifths, C to F to B flat, to E flat, etc., until we reach the bottom. In short, when we move in either direction from button to button we are moving in fifths. This arrangement of buttons makes the execution of simple songs extremely easy, for any given button in the fundamental row has its dominant tone and chords directly above it and its sub-dominant tone and chords directly below it.

The counter-bass row also is arranged in this order of fifths. The counter-bass button of our main C (in the same diagonal row) is the note E, a major third above C. The counter-bass of G is B, a major third above G. To play the major triad in arpeggio form one plays the C fundamental, its counter-bass and the button above C in the fundamental row. The same holds true of the G triad and all the other triads. If one can play a C major scale in the bass, one can automatically play all the major scales just by starting on

any fundamental and using exactly the same finger pattern as used in playing the C major scale. The same holds true of any other scale. Once the finger pattern is set it can be played in any key without any change of fingering and spacing. This holds true of the chords also. There are certain set patterns for playing what is known as an alternating bass with the major, minor, seventh and Diminished chords that once memorized on C can be done in like manner throughout the whole bass keyboard.

We can see now why the acordion is so easy for the novice to learn, for the clever arrangement of the basses make it so. Although in the beginning the bass is so very simple and easy to play we will find a bit later that it becomes difficult to master.

Starting with our main bass C (the lowest sounding note on the accordion) we can chromatically move higher and higher until we reach the B above this C. At this point, however, the octave cannot be completed for when we press the C button we find it is the same original button we started with and this will sound an octave lower than the C we wish. However, in some cases when there is time the bass register may be pressed giving the octave. For a complete picture of the notes contained in each button, see page 74.

The bass section also has various sets of reeds sometimes having as many as five.

Register marking have now been standardized and are listed on page 75.

It would be well to mention at this point an innovation in the accordion. This innovation, one which seems to be rising in importance today, is that of amplification. This consists of a microphone attachment connected to the accordion and plugged into an amplifier. The amplifier has fixed tone positions which can bring out the different reeds

and their mixtures. It cuts down to a minimum the fatigue of the player, since all sounds are magnified by the amplifier. Also with a built in tremolo which can be controlled for speed and which produces a beautiful effect, something new is added to the accordion.

The use of amplification is now widespread. A number of leading artists are making full use of it and in view of the great demand, it is almost certainly here to stay.

The correct playing position of the accordion is important. The right shoulder strap of the accordion should be longer than the left one, allowing the keyboard to fall in such a position that the black keys form almost a straight line directly under the chin of the player. When played in sitting position, the lower edge of the keyboard should rest against the inner side of the right leg, keeping the accordion from moving about when it is being played. The left leg may be dropped a little in order not to hamper the bellows action. When standing one should hold the accordion in the same position (black keys in line with the chin), however, a back strap linking the two shoulder straps across the small of the back may be used to give more support and to keep the instrument from moving.

The finger tips of the right hand should rest on the keys. The thumb should rest flat on its side and the other fingers should be curved with the cushions of the finger playing the keys. There should be very little curve or arching of the wrist and the line from the elbow to the fingers should be almost straight.

The left hand should pass under the lefthand bass strap so that the wrist is under this strap. The lower part of the hand rests against the bass-board leaving the fingers free to play.

The bellows should open and close in a fan-like manner.

They should open and close smoothly wthout sudden movement.

In order to get the maximum use out of an accordion it must be treated with care. Extreme temperatures affect the accordion and must be avoided as much as possible. If the accordion gets excessively cold the reed may be affected and as a result sound out of tune. It is best to let the accordion get warm before playing. By using the air release button and operating the bellows in and out one can get warm air to pass over the reeds and thus get the accordion ready for playing.

Heat also is bad for the accordion since the wax that holds the reed plates in place may melt and thereby set the reeds loose.

Dust accumulations work through the grill and into the reeds causing them to get out of tune. To prevent this, the accordion should be kept clean and well-dusted.

The bellows must always be locked except when playing. Belt buckles, suit buttons, brooches, etc. should be kept away from the bellows for the friction produced by the bellows rubbing against them may tear or cut. Take care of any leaks in the bellows before they get too large and involve much expense to repair.

Obviously, jarring the accordion can cause much damage. Reed blocks can come loose, the delicate mechanism in the instrument may be affected and many other troubles arise from such treatment.

The accordion is rather an expensive instrument (ranging in price from around $300.00 to $1700.00 or more) but if well taken care of has a relatively long life time. Repairing of the accordion is an item which can be expensive. Since it is so delicate and complicated it is best to take it to an expert repairman for any major work.

CHAPTER III

REPERTOIRE

The development of a musical instrument and its universal acceptance in the musical world is determined largely by the literature which has been developed for it and the quality of this literature is determined not only by the greatness of the composer but on the discriminating musical taste of the publishers who publish it.

We find that Ottavio Pagani was a man of such musical taste and with enough foresight to see the possibilities of publishing music for the accordion. After hearing Pietro Deiro in 1918 and talking to him, Mr. Pagani saw the possibilities of creating a field for accordion music. He persuaded Pietro Deiro to write the first piano accordion method ever published and put it on the market. This method was known as The Pietro Accordion Method and has sold thousands of copies.

Perceiving the success of this method, Ottavio Pagani immediately followed it up with the publication of 65 arrangements. This was a daring move and one which surprised the music industry. Other publishers followed suit and this was the start of a very successful field of publication.

Of the numerous original compositions for the accordion, the following are just a few of those most outstanding of various composers:

Concertos in A. D and E ..... Pietro Deiro
Concerto in G minor ..... Anthony Galla-Rini
Concerto in G Major ..... Wm. Meyer
Manhattan Concerto ..... Eugene Ettore
Concerto in D Minor ..... Andy Arcari
Rhapsody No. 2 ..... Pietro Deiro
Scherzo ..... John Gart
Rhapsodies 1, 2 and 3 ..... Pietro Frosini
Lamentations ..... Virgil Thomson
Eternal Spring Overture ..... Pietro Deiro
The Rooster ..... Joe Biviano
Waltz Allegro ..... Chas. Magnante
Prelude and Dance ..... Paul Creston
Egypto Overture ..... Guido Deiro
Cooper Square ..... Wallingford Reigger
Etude on False Notes ..... Alfred d'Auberge

One of the most important compositions ever written expressly for the accordion is undoubtedly "Prelude and Dance" by Paul Creston. It deserves an honored place not only because of its superb quality, but also because it is the first work for accordion ever written by a universally recognized composer. The public premier was performed by Carmen Carrozza to a packed Carnegie Hall. At the completion of the piece, both Mr. Carozza, and Mr. Creston received a standing ovation from a grateful audience. With this one composition the accordion had taken the largest forward step in many years.

Of the works of the masters we find a continually growing library of accordion arrangements by some of the most serious and talented musicians in the field. Today there is hardly a classical composer who is not well represented in accordion publications.

Of course, there are many other fine arrangements and original compositions for the accordion, but unfortunately all cannot be listed. By writing to the various publishing houses catalogues may be obtained listing the numerous works available.

Of the concertos written and published expressly for the accordion there are the three previously mentioned by Deiro, a concerto in G minor by Gall-Rini, a concerto in D minor by Andy Arcari, Manhattan Concerto by Eugene Ettore, Concerto in G major by Wm. Meyer. Reflections, a suit for accordion and full sympothy orchestra by Andrew Walter, is one of the more recent major works in the field. The complete suite has been made available as a commercial recording as well as the score and full orchestral instrumentation.

Some of our modern composers have also written for the accordion. Roy Harris wrote a concerto for Accordion and Orchestra, Alban Berg has included an accordion in the second act of his opera *Wozzeck* and Marc Blitzstein used the accordion in his *The Cradle Will Rock.* Wallingford Rieger's *Cooper Square* is still another important addition from a modern composer.

In the publication of accordion music there was a considerable lack of standardization of notation. As far as the treble side of the accordion is concerned the music is written according to usual form. But in writing for the bass section this did not hold true.

In the past the treble clef sign had been used for the bass, but this now has been standardized and the bass clef is used.

Also, there have existed many systems of notation for indicating chords in the bass such as symbols, numbers, colons, etc.

The system known as A.A.A. notation, (American Accordionists' Association) is now considered the standard since it has been accepted by all publishers and teachers. This system uses the root note of the chord written on or above the third line of the staff with the symbol M (for major), m (for minor), 7 (for seventh), and d (for diminished) *over* the note depending on which chord is wanted.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACCORDION'S PLACE IN SERIOUS MUSIC

An event took place on April 18, 1939 which was of historic portent for the accordion. This event can now be recorded as the first invasion of the accordion into Carnegie Hall. This concert presented Charles Magnante assisted by Joe Biviano, Abe Goldman and Gene von Halberg.

In a report of this momentous occasion the following was written.

> With Paul Prinz at the string bass, they opened the program with Bach's famous "Toccata and Fugue in D Minor," followed by the "Rondo Capriccioso" of Mendelssohn. A moment of appreciative silence, then applause rang out, echoing and re-echoing through the Hall. And those who had been skeptical or merely curious, joined in. This was indeed *music.*

This pioneer concert was accepted very favorably by the critics. Robert C. Bagar of the New York World-Telegram said "musically there was valid entertainment for the gathering. As to the importance of the accordion, that, too, was tellingly established."

Since this concert, the accordion has made conquest after conquest in the concert field and has converted many, many fine musicians into appreciative admirers and advocates.

Galla-Rini has performed his concerto with such major orchestras as the Detroit Symphony and the Denver Symphony, not to mention the innumerable recitals and concerts he has given all over the country and abroad.

Other successful concert artists now actively engaging in concert work are Toralf Tollefsen, who has appeared as soloist with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra in the performance of the Deiro *Concerto in E;* Andy Arcari and Carmen Carrozza, who have widely concertized; and Daniel Desiderio who, with the Air Force Orchestra has often appeared with this great organization as soloist playing original compositions with orchestra.

An outstanding honor for the accordion was achieved when Andy Arcari played with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Eugene Ormandy. He played as an integral part of a symphony. This was the performance of the Virgil Thomson "Arcadian Sketches" from the *Louisiana Story.* In this work the composer did not write a special solo part for the accordion but used the instrument principally to increase the variety of effects of the entire orchestra.

Mr. Eugene Ormandy was impressed with the performance and expressed the hope that further symphonic music would include the accordion.

With Mr. Ormandy as a start let us now look and see what many other serious composers, musicians and musicologists have said about the accordion's place in serious music and also what they have written and done for it.

Mr. Virgil Thomson who has used the accordion in his "Arcadian Sketches," mentioned above, and in his modern American opera entitled *Four Saints in Three Acts* says of this instrument:

> The accordion is a most valuable orchestral instrument. I find it useful in soft passages and incomparable for strong accents. It blends admirably with strings and with the harmonium. The chief inconvenience in writing for it is the scarcity of

schooled players who can read rapidly and correctly and who are accustomed to orchestral routine. Let us hope that in a few years we shall see the instrument used for ensemble writing more currently than it is at present.

Another composer who looks with favor upon the accordion is Marc Blitzstein. He used it very effectively in his composition, *The Cradle Will Rock.*

When Elsie M. Bennett on behalf of the American Accordionists' Association, interviewed this illustrious composer she made notes of some several important and interesting points that the composer brought forth about the accordion. Since they are very noteworthy and should be of special interest to the composer and musician it would be well to list these points. They are as follows:

1. The accordion has real stature. Being a rather special instrument, it must necessarily be treated as such because a single line melody can cut through an entire orchestra including the loudest brass (the sound is so piercing and so full of quality). One must be careful in using it as an accompaniment or a choral instrument, since its virtue of standing out can also become its defect.

2. In "The Cradle Will Rock," Mr. Blitzstein used the accordion in three different ways:

   (a) He imitated the organ in a scene which took place in a mission. This was good since the sound was thinner than the organ and helped establish atmospheric effect of locale.

   (b) He also used it for street sound and folk sound. The accordion is ideally adapted for that.

(c) He used it as a filler-in-harmonically, but with rather widely spaced chords so as not to isolate the instrument from the rest of the harmonic texture.

He wrote for the accordion sometimes using various methods such as: a treble melodic line; chordally with the melody; an actual simple bass line (he uses the bass part of the accordion alone as a counter melody in one entire passage); and for rhythmic effects.

3. Of the accordion, Marc Blitzstein spoke most enthusiastically. He felt that the acordion in its way is a kind of substitute for a full orchestra because like the piano and harp, it has an enormous range in both treble and bass, but the accordion has a sustaining note, not a percussive note. When writing for the accordion with the orchestra, he doesn't always use all of its range but uses it for special color effects.

4. It is a strong instrument and rather perilous, for you can't write for it as the regular instrument. It is too strong and conspicuous. Handled well, it can fit right into the orchestral texture. Handled wrong, it can sound like a bull in a china shop.

5. The basic aspects of the accordion which are its virtues carry with them the danger. The tone color, even the nasal quality is agreeable for special purposes. For serious music, it is a characteristic instrument having as much quality as an oboe or a bassoon, but like them, there can be too much of a good thing. It can rob the orchestra of balance unless it is used carefully. With care, a wonderful basic sound can be procured which no orchestra can be without.

   Besides this opera, Mr. Blitzstein has recently completed

the Kurt Weil *Three Penny Opera,* in which he uses the accordion with the bandoneon register.

Alban Berg is another composer who has utilized the accordion. In his opera, *Wozzeck,* the accordion is to be heard throughout the second act. On April 12, 13 and 15, 1951 it was performed at Carnegie Hall under the conductorship of Dimitri Mitropoulos. The accordion part was played by Joe Biviano. It is interesting to note that although this opera was written in 1922, its original score included an accordion part.

George Gershwin allowed his *Rhapsody in Blue* to be played in its entirety by an accordionist (Cornell Smelser with the Ohman-Arden Orchestra) on the radio. This was on the evening of April 20, 1931. The only other musicians allowed to broadcast this work at that time were Paul Whiteman (with his orchestra) and Jesse Crawford, organist.

Roy Harris was commissioned by the Midwest Accordionist's Association to write a work for accordion and orchestra and as a result he wrote a concerto. It was completed April 13, 1947 and was presented over Station WJZ by the American Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra with Andy Rizzo as soloist in June, 1947.

The dream of many accordionists is to see the accordion occupying a regular position or "chair" in a standard symphony orchestra. However, since the instrumentation of the standard orchestra has remained fixed for a great length of time there is little chance of an immediate change. Of course, it may be used at times in the same category as the harp or organ when used in conjunction with the orchestra.

However, something unique in sound may be found in a symphony orchestra made up of free reed instruments such as accordions, concertinas and bandoneons. Accordion

symphony orchestras are already in existence. Many more are rapidly springing up all over the country and may well compete with the standard symphony orchestra. In Europe they are already doing so.

In Germany there are some fine accordion orchestras, of which two leading ones are conducted by Rudolph Wurthner and Alan Helm, respectively. Some years ago, when visiting in England, Alan Helm's accordion orchestra recorded in London an original work composed by G. S. Mathis entitled "Spring," Symphonic Impression (Tone Poem), Parts 1 and 2, on "His Master's Voice": (H.M.V.) 664. The work is described as follows:

> Written in the modern harmonic idiom, akin in parts to the music of Debussy and Stravinsky, it is the first attempts to provide the accordion with that type of serious symphonic music which, until now has been the prerogative of the (standard) symphony orchestra. One truly becomes lost for words at the graceful playing, and the accordion tone seems to become almost perfect woodwinds and strings.

We should mention here the Frontalini accordion orchestra in Italy. Although composed of keyboard accordions, the Frontalini orchestra has each accordion made as a duplicate sounding instrument necessary to a symphony. For instance, flutes, cellos, horns, clarinets, etc., are duplicated in tone by the various accordion reeds.

This orchestra has given many concert appearances and under the direction of Mattia Gleich, has appeared as an orchestral background for Beniamino Gigli, famous operatic tenor who says that this orchestra "reproduces magnificently all the qualities of the symphony orchestra."

Pietro Deiro was commissioned by Mr. Frontalini, founder of the orchestra, to write a serious work for it. He wrote what is now known as the *Rhapsody in C, No.* 2. It has been recorded by the Frontalini group on Cetra Label records.

A great victory in the drive to have the accordion accepted as a completely recognized musical instrument was achieved in Italy in 1946. For it was then that Pope Pius XII decreed that accordions may be played in Catholic churches. Since the accordion had heretofore been banned in some dioceses, this official sanction is of historic importance.

The accordion presented to the Pope was a specially built instrument said to be the most valuable accordion ever built, being valued at $5,000.00. It has six sets of reeds each on treble and bass and has 33 different tonal combinations. About 50% heavier than the average accordion, it weighs 32 pounds. Some of the reeds are almost as big as organ reeds.

The following is a description of the accordion (printed in the article entitled "Pope Approves Accordion," Accordion World, April, 1946):

> Another feature of this specially built accordion is that it has sustaining basses like an organ. The tone is remarkable and it is a really fine musical instrument of superb quality.
>
> After hearing it played the Pope told his attendants gathered around him that he could see nothing wrong in the use of the accordion in churches, thus scoring another victory in the drive to have the accordion accepted as a completely recognized instrument.

The accordion today is used by all denominations, and

accordion choirs have sprung up and are used in many churches. Dressed in their choir robes they perform such music as the "Holy City" by Adams, "Now Thank We All Our God" by Bach, "Oh Bon Jesu" by Palestrina and many other hymns.

Besides the formation of accordion choirs and symphony groups other accordion activities include contests and festivals sponsored in the best interests of students and of further speed complete acceptance of the accordion.

Accordion bands appear conspicuously in music festivals all over the country. The American Accordionists' Association, for example, sponsors annual contests for soloists and bands. These conests each year continue growing and have a tremendous number of participants from all over the country. The pinnacle of all contests is the World Championship conducted by the C.I.A. (Confederation International des Accordionistes) a world organization composed of individual national organizations.

Organizations have been formed to aid the accordion in becoming an accepted instrument. One of these organizations is the above mentioned American Accordionists' Association.

This organization was formed on the evening of March 9, 1938 when ten men well known in the accordion and music field gathered together to organize an association, which has now grown to national proportions. The charter membership included such well known personalities as Charles Magnante, Abe Goldman, Joe Biviano, Pietro Deiro, Pietro Frosini, Charles Nunzio, Anthony Galla-Rini, Sidney Dawson and Sam Rowland. Later, both Mr. Galla-Rini and Sidney Dawson withdrew and formed The Accordion Teachers Guild.

Among the purposes of the A.A.A. is to gain recogni-

tion for the accordion as well as to be able to place the instrument on an equal basis with other band and orchestra instruments, in that it may be recognized in individual and group competition in Local, State and National High School Contests.

There are several types of memberships in this organization. One is for teachers, who, if they favorably pass an examination, become certified A.A.A. teachers with the privilege of displaying the A.A.A. certificate and emblem. Pupils are encouraged to look for A.A.A. teachers. The other membership is for those who wish to keep informed of the latest news and innovations in the field. This includes both Professional and Commercial members.

The American Accordionists' Association sponsors national contests for students and non-professionals. It is affiliated with various other groups such as the Brazilian Union of Accordionists, and the C.I.A.

This organization is also working for accordion standardization. The specifications set up by the American Accordionists' Association for a standard accordion include the overall length of case, width of case, width of 41 keys measuring from the outside F-A, and row of 20 bass buttons from top to bottom. Pietro Deiro, attending the Milan convention in 1949, was successful in having the dominant and diminished seventh chords standardized, that is, all these chords will, on all future accordions, have their fifth omitted.

Another active accordion organization is the Accordion Teacher's Guild (A.T.G.). This organization was formed with the belief that the level of teaching and the type of teachers will, in the main, decide the future of the accordion, and more important the use it can be in developing our cultural life, and better, happier citizens. There are of course

other aspects of the problem, but even these depend mainly on the teacher. According to the A.T.G., they believe that accordion literature, music and teaching material will only be developed as teachers are developed.

The examinations for becoming an ATG teacher are graded in different levels thus encouraging the teacher to work to reach higher levels. This organization also is working for the recognition and acceptance of the accordion.

Many local and independent organizations are affiliated with either or both the American Accordionists' Association and the Accordion Teachers Guild such as the Rocky Mountain Accordion Association (Denver), the Seattle Teachers Association, the Cleveland Teachers Association, etc.

In Brazil we find the Union of Brazilian Accordionists (U.B.A.) making wonderful progress under the direction of Agib Francheschini, a devotee of the accordion. He was successful in establishing the accordion in the Carlo Gomez University in that country. A great deal of the honors for the accordion in that country belong to him.

In Great Britain one finds an extreme interest in the accordion. These activities are headed by the British College of Accordionists, which is conducted as a non-profit organization, which offers tuition in all grades. Its syllabus is used by the majority of accordion teachers.

The National Accordion Organization (NAO) of Great Britain provides a common link and a common badge of friendship for all those interested in the accordion. A series of nationwide area contests are held throughout the country, culminating in the Championship Contests on Accordion Day; where Soloists, Duets and Bands compete in a friendly and competitive spirit. Up to date records are kept of all teachers in Great Britain who receive a bi-monthly NAO Review. The Governing Committee of the NAO is com-

posed of elected members from the 12 areas in the nation.

With all this activity here and abroad in the accordion field by so many sincere followers and admirers, there is little doubt that the accordion already has, and will continue to have, even more so, a place in the field of serious music.

CHAPTER V

ACCORDION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The American Accordionists' Association, for one, is working towards the goal of having the accordion accepted in the public schools. It is achieving this by sending a speaker and an accordion artist to the various conventions and concerts sponsored by teachers, supervisors, etc. The speaker explains and discusses the accordion and the accordionist demonstrates its potentialities.

As a result of this activity, the interest of many teachers has been aroused and the accordion has ben introduced into their schools, either through actual teaching in the school or through the formation of accordion bands.

Mr. Forrest L. McAllister, publisher and editor of the outstanding magazine, *The School Musician,* and formerly associated with the American Music Conference, takes a great interest in the accordion.

CONCLUSION

Through this volume, the piano accordion has been traced from its very infancy, centuries before Christ, in China, and followed through its colorful and interesting career into the present. Now, it appears a full grown instrument on the threshold of ripe maturity. Its most fruitful years lie ahead and it is to these years its exponents, admirers and advocates look.

Although our present day accordion has multi-registers, beautiful and rich tone, easy action, etc., the accordion of the future will be even more phenomenal, for the accordion is beginning to come to the attention of outstanding musicians everywhere. Manufacturers are constantly working to achieve perfection of quality and performance and it would not be too optimistic to predict the accordion of the future to be an instrument which will equal the great pipe organ in tonal color and range and yet retain its present portability.

Some of the improvements and innovations that can be looked forward to are: (1) Improvement and standardization of the bass section, (2) the sustaining of notes or chords in a pedal point, (3) a tremolo or bellows shake playable in either the bass section or the treble section independently, (4) a standardization of dimensions, (5) a standardization of terminology.

While these are improvements we can look to with certainty, there will, in all probability, be many more that will be achieved.

The success and validity of an instrument can only be

measured by the music written for it and the virtuosi who play it. We look to the future for even greater artists and more literature of a serious nature to be written for the accordion. When enough great music is composed and enough great virtuosi appear on the horizon to perform it, the accordion will become a bright shining star in the galaxy of musical instruments.

Accordion symphonies, too, will offer a new kind of music that will have an individuality and special quality of its own. Accordion groups will not be a novelty in the schools any longer but will be an accepted part of the musical curriculum.

Eventually, in the near future, there will scarcely be a college, university or conservatory that will not accept the accordion as a major instrument for a credit.

Much depends upon the efforts of those already in the field to bring the potentialities of the accordion to the attention of the many gifted and promising composers who are springing up all over the country. These rich sources of talent can be channeled and encouraged into writing new and great music for this instrument when they are made sufficiently aware of its versatility and flexibility. And when such music is written there will be no doubt of the accordion having a strong foothold in the music world.

Only a handful of bigoted critics (out of the great sea of broadminded ones) will remain and obstinately refuse to listen or see the potentialities and scope of the piano accordion.

Since "what is past is prologue" we may predict from the increasingly favorable attitude and respect with which the modern conductors, musicologists and composers have viewed the accordion, that a happy future is well assured.

APPENDIX

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF FAMOUS ACCORDIONISTS

The accordion not too many years ago was in dire need of musicians who could play with true artistry and musicianship, and so it was held in disfavor by most instrumentalists in other fields. It was considered an instrument not acceptable in the best musical circles and it was taken for granted that an accordionist could not be placed in the same category with true musicians.

Fortunately, in spite of the great odds against them, there were a small handful of musicians who had great faith in the accordion and were brave enough to pioneer and blaze a trail for it, a trail in which many were to follow.

As a result, today we have a great number of fine artists playing the accordion and composing for it. To mention them all and to discuss their accomplishments and contributions to the accordion world would require several volumes. Therefore, this book can only mention a brief biography of the pioneers and list of some of the countless numbers of artists of great merit.

The first accordionist who comes to mind is the man who is known by all accordionists as "The Daddy of the Accordion," the great Pietro Deiro. It is to him and to his constant and tireless efforts that the accordion owes so much today.

Pietro Deiro was born in Salto, Italy in 1888. There he began his musical studies. Although his first accordion was

hardly more than a toy, he managed, even with its limitations, to play the folk music of his country. Recognizing the limitations of his instrument, he coaxed his father into buying a larger one. With this larger instrument Pietro was enabled to perform the operatic music which he liked so well.

Later Pietro Deiro travelled to Germany, studied further and earned enough money to come to America to live with his uncle in Cle Elum, Washington. He was encouraged in his playing and as a result was determined to get the best possible training in theory and playing. In Seattle he was musically guided by his brother Guido and Mr. Peter Morelli.

Soon he found himself on the vaudeville stage in San Francisco. He had to do all the arranging for the music he was to play, and as a result over five hundred arrangements and compositions of his have been published for the accordion.

And thus was launched a career that consisted of one success after another and established Pietro as the highest salaried headlined performer in the leading theaters of this country. He also became a Victor Recording Artist and concertized through the U.S. and Canada.

In his early days of playing, Pietro had used a semitone accordion. When one arrived from Italy for him with a piano keyboard on the right side he was not satisfied with it and he ordered one to be made especially for him in San Francisco by the Guerrini Company. Even this accordion did not meet with his approval and he had it re-made. This instrument, when finally completed according to Pietro Deiro's specifications, was the first piano accordion made in America and made its first official appearance in public at the Washington Square Theatre in San Francisco in the year

1909, Pietro Deiro, of course, being the artist who played it.

Although Pietro's career on the vaudeville stage, along with his concert work and recording virtuosity established him supreme in this, his art, it was the fact that he realized the need for study books, arrangements and original compositions that have placed him above the category of the ordinary accordionist. To him is attributed the fact that he made the road easier for others to follow.

Pietro Deiro's original compositions have been especially instrumental in raising the accordion standard. As one of the original and most noted accordion composers, it must be remembered that it was the calibre of his concertos, overtures and standard compositions which helped the accordion in its upward trend.

Throughout his life he encouraged the writing of original accordion compositions. He based his thoughts on the fact that the "Accordion can rise only as high as the music which is written for it."

With the passing of this great pioneer on November 3, 1954 the accordion world suffered a tremendous loss. Although Pietro Deiro was celebrated and appreciated by all acordionists in his own time, it remains, as in the case of all great men, to posterity, to fully appreciate the magnitude and far-reaching scope of his efforts and contributions.

Another great artist was the late Pietro Frosini. Playing the chromatic type of accordion he made wonderful contributions to the accordion field. Frosini wrote countless original compositions and made endless numbers of arrangements which are in almost every accordionist's active repertoire.

Pietro Frosini was born in Catania, Sicily, August 9, 1885. He began to play at the early age of six under the

instruction of his father. Because of his remarkable musical talent, he was sent to a musical college at the age of ten. Since the accordion was not recognized in those days he received education on the piano and on band instruments along with training in composition and theory.

Since he was fond of the cornet he learned to play it so well, that at the age of 14 he had earned the position of first cornet player in the British Naval Band at Malta.

Sometime later, however, Frosini returned to his beloved accordion. In 1905 in California he was launched on a successful vaudeville career with his chromatic accordion. Later he entered the field of radio and as a result became one of the most popular radio artists. He also established himself as a brilliant recording artist. The bellows shake which is in such great use today was perfected and used by Frosini.

Mr. Frosini passed away on September 29, 1951, at the age of 66. His outstanding musicianship did much to elevate the accordion and his hundreds of compositions for accordion did much to enrich the accordion library.

Pioneer of the accordion, Guido Deiro was born in Salto Canavese, near Turin in Italy. He was the first of the two brothers, Pietro and Guido, to play the accordion starting when he was but nine years old.

It is strange that in this family of accordionists, all the playing was against the wishes of their father, who had other plans for both Guido and Pietro, and who insisted that his sons follow in his grocery business. Guido often remarked "with music in my heart there was no inspiration in groceries."

The professional career of Guido started in Switzerland at the age of 14. His work took him to Germany, where he resolved to start serious music studies. Later he emigrated to America at the call of brother Pietro, where he also

settled in Cle Elum, Washington. His musical prowess soon brought him engagements in theatres which eventually led him about the United States and Canada and to England and Australia, where he also established a remarkable following.

The first Guido Deiro recording was placed on the record market in May 1911 by the Columbia Recording Company. It contained two compositions destined to become favorites of the accordion public "Sharpshooters March" and "Ciribiribin." It remained a public favorite for many years. This successful recording led to further waxings with Edison and Columbia.

Many concert and stage engagements followed up to the time of his death in July 26th, 1950.

It might be well to add that probably another first of this famous personality was his appearance as an accordionist in motion pictures, although this has never been definitely established. He numbered many movie stars among his friends, among whom are Leo Carrillo who had a special affection for him. It is evident that even a brief sketch such as this, is also a history of the rise of the accordion.

On the cover of the National Accordion Review, September 1932, is a picture of Anthony Gall-Rini, under which may be found the statement that "his main ambition is to help place the accordion on the highest pedestal in the musical world." Since that time, all his efforts have been directed toward this goal and he has done much to achieve his ambition.

Galla-Rini was born in Manchester, Conn. His first formal music tutor was Professor Van Broekhaven. Later he studied under Gastone Usigli at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, taking up theory of music, operatic and symphonic conducting.

One of the world's foremost concert accordionists, Anthony Galla-Rini has concertized very extensively. He gave the first performance of his own Concerto in G minor in 1941 in Oklahoma. Since then he has performed this concerto with such major orchestras as the Detroit Symphony and the Denver Symphony, not to mention the innumerable recitals and concerts he has given all over the country and abroad.

In 1936 Mr. Galla-Rini was asked to give accordion instructions at the International Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan. He impressed such eminent musicians as Dr. Walter Damrosch, Dr. Joseph Maddy, Vladimir Bakaleninikoff and others with the fact that the accordion was entitled to the title of a true and legitimate instrument. The accordion also proved to be the instrument most popular with the teachers and students.

Today, Galla-Rini is recognized as a great leader in the accordion field. He has made many great transcriptions, arrangements and superb recordings. Listed among his original works is his very fine accordion concerto.

Mr. Galla-Rini says of the accordion that it "has progressed tremendously in the past few years. It has achieved tremendous popularity in many kinds of theatrical enterprises and for personal entertainment. But, it will advance still further, for its acceptance as a concert instrument has just begun."

Another star burning brightly in the accordion's galaxy of great artists is that of Charles Magnante. His myriads of wonderful accordion arrangements are used by students and professionals alike.

Charles Magnante was born in New York. He began studying the accordion at the age of nine and by the time he was fourteen was earning his living by his playing. At

the age of sixteen, his musicianship was so outstanding, that many contracts were offered him. He refused them on the grounds that he felt he needed more concentrated study.

When Erno Rapee engaged Magnante to play with the symphony orchestra on station WEAF another milestone was realized in the progress of the accordion. This was the first time an accordion had been used in a symphony orchestra.

Today in addition to concertizing throughout the country, Charles Magnante has become a standard bearer for the accordion. Combining concerts and teacher workshops he has ably dedicated his efforts towards the advancement of the accordion teacher and teaching standards. In these workshop classes he concentrates, not only upon the proper development of technique, but, also upon the use of the accordion in the many phases of music.

A composer and arranger of recognized proportions, his methods, studies and arrangements are issued by leading publishers.

His recordings and thousands of radio transcriptions have always been pinnacles of perfection. As one of the best known names on the air, his flawless technique has always been a source of inspiration to the many students of the accordion.

In Charles Nunzio we find an accordionist who has always fostered the desire to help raise the accordion to the position it so rightfully deserves.

Mr. Nunzio started studying the accordion with his father at a very early age. Nino Stramandino taught him solfeggio for four years. For execution and interpretation, he studied with Frank Umbriaco, an outstanding pioneer in the field of accordion.

Charles Nunzio soon developed into a fine artist. He

had the honor of being the first staff accordionist for Station WOR in 1928. In 1925 he opened a studio in Newark and countless numbers of concert artists and professionals have studied in his fine school.

Among his writings may be found many fine and noteworthy original compositions along with some excellent arrangements.

He, too, along with many other fine artists, is constantly seeking means to improve the accordion and is proud of the changes that he was instrumental in suggesting.

A school that is producing an ever-growing number of fine musicians and artists is the Frank Gaviani School in Boston. The founder and head of this School is Frank Gaviani.

Mr. Gaviani was born in the United States in 1908 but his family moved back to Italy and there he lived until he was fourteen. He studied in Italy with the famous Luigi Macrelli and continued his musical education in Boston when his family returned to America. His studies included piano, harmony and composition.

He began playing professionally, but continued to study intensively with Frosini and Pietro Deiro. Eventually, he became an instructor in the Pietro Deiro Accordion School and he stayed there for six years.

Mr. Gaviani has made many concert appearances and is known for his flawless technique. His compositions number many and include many fine accordion solos and books of study which are much in use throughout the country.

Looking through the gallery of artists we meet with Joe Biviano. Born in Jersey City of Italian parents, Joseph Biviano showed a natural love for music which was developed by his mother and father. A pupil of Charles

Magnante, Mr. Biviano has done much radio and stage work.

Recently he wrote and played the background music for Warner Brothers filming of "The Knife Throwers" by De Maupassant. He also wrote the music background for the Michael Shane radio series using the electric accordion, electric guitar and tympani.

Mr. Biviano had the honor of playing the accordion part in the opera *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg at its initial performance given in this country. The orchestra was the New York Philharmonic and it was under the direction of Dimitri Mitropoulos.

This versatile musician has recently done all the recording calling for accordion with Andre Kostelanetz, and is active in the field of writing, teaching and playing.

A brilliant virtuoso and a musician's musician is found in the person of Mr. Andy Arcari. He is one of the most versatile of all accordionists, with a repertoire ranging from his own Concerto in D Minor to modern swing and progressive jazz.

In the twenties when the accordion was still an undeveloped instrument with limited public appeal, Mr. Arcari helped to pioneer its popularity by playing private concerts for society affairs with chamber orchestras, and by giving many helpful suggestions to manufacturers to improve the accordion.

He gave his first formal concert at the Academy of Music Foyer, in Philadelphia, in 1934. Time Magazine in reviewing the concert said: "Here is a brilliance in scale and arpeggio technique that many a violinist could envy."

In World War II, Mr. Arcari became one of the most popular entertainers in the war zones, travelling more than 200,000 miles playing for our Armed Forces.

Mr. Arcari believes the accordion made its greatest stride as a concert instrument during World War II. Because of U.S.O. Tours, thousands of GI's saw the accordion and heard its musical possibilities.

Andy Arcari sees a new era for the virtuoso accordionist beginning to take form. Mr. Arcari has the honor of being the first accordionist to play a major work with a symphony orchestra. This was the premiere of the first accordion Concerto in D minor, which he wrote in 1939 and performed at a music appreciation concert under Guglielmo Sabatini, conducting the Pennsylvania Symphony. This concert took place in Philadelphia, April 23, 1941. Henry Pleasants, music critic, wrote of this performance, "The Concerto, which is apparently the first concerto ever undertaken, is brilliant and spirited, providing Mr. Arcari with ample opportunities to exploit his amazing velocity."

Mr. Arcari has appeared with many major symphonies, including the Philadelphia orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. As soloist he has appeared with the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra under Franz Allers, the Greater Miami Symphony Orchestra under Oliver Washburn, and the Radio City Symphony Orchestra under Alexander Smallens.

Believing that the only reason the accordion isn't heard more frequently with symphonic orchestras, is that we need additional literature written specifically for it, Mr. Arcari established the Arcari Foundation for the express purpose of securing this material.

Mr. Arcari is at present devoting his time to coaching young artists, concertizing and composing. Recently, he composed a sonata for the accordion which he premiered in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle in Utah.

A name that will deserves a niche among the greats, is that of Carmen Carrozza. This young artist has taken the

concert field by storm having appeared in the last few years in such concert halls as Carnegie and Town Halls in New York, Music Hall in Detroit and the Philadelphia Academy of Music in Philadelphia. He has appeared with the Eastern Conservatory of Music Symphony Orchestra in the performance of Pietro Deiro's Concerto in A.

A protege of Pietro Deiro, Carmen Carrozza is one of the outstanding classic accordionists today. He was born in Solano, Italy but came to the United States at the age of ten and began his studying soon after. Since then he has dedicaed his life's work toward the advancement of the instrument and music. His music study has continued right up to the present and he has been thoroughly schooled in theory and harmony by such outstanding instructors as the late Pietro Deiro and Hugo Gigante.

His recordings as well as his concert appearances have won acclaim from the accordion public as well as from music critics. One can, without exaggeration, class his recordings of the Deiro Concertos in A and E, and the Fantasie Impromptu as monuments of technical and interpretative achievement. His treatment of the classics is rapidly setting the pattern for accordion artists to follow.

Among Mr. Carrozza's original compositions are Solano Overture, Cascade Novelty and Parisian Musette. His arrangements of the lighter standard and classical compositions are gems enriching and brightening the accordion library.

A still younger artist rapidly rising in the musical horizon is Daniel Desiderio. He has had the honor of being a member and soloist with the United States Air Force Orchestra, under the direction of Colonel George S. Howard. A brilliant performer, arranger and composer, much is expected of Daniel Desiderio in the accordion field.

Throughout this work the emphasis has been on the accordion and its place in the field of classical music. However, it has not been the desire of the author to slight the accordion's place in the field of jazz or to overlook the many great contributions of the fine accordion artists in that field. To cover the accordion and its development in the field of jazz would require a volume in itself. Nonetheless, even in a book such as this, the author feels that some of the outstanding jazz accordionists should be mentioned, however briefly.

Art Van Damme, through his television and radio programs as well as recordings, is probably the first to come to mind as a leading jazz accordionist. His quintet featuring accordion and vibraphone is heard almost daily on leading networks. He has been a winner of the Down Beat poll as Jazz Accordionists Of The Year for two years in succession.

Mat Mathews is one of the few chromatic accordionists in the country. His style and improvising abilities have placed him in constant demand by jazz outfits. He has had the pleasure of playing with such men as Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, and many others. In the Metronome poll he has been chosen both musician of the year and accordionist of the year. Recording for Brunswick and Mercury.

Others who have given freely to the world of jazz are Leon Sash whose recordings are pinnacles of perfection in this idiom. Tony Dannon of Detroit appears almost nightly with his jazz combo in and around Detroit and great things are expected of this youngster in time to come. Ernie Felice is another of today's greats in the modern field who is looked up to by every aspiring jazz accordionist.

Returning once again to the field of concert music, one must take note of the great number of artists in Canada and abroad who are doing so much for the accordion.

One of the outstanding accordionists in Great Britain is Toralf Tollefsen. Mr. Tollefsen appeared with the International Symphony Orchestra under Fistoulari in London on March 14, 1947 at the Royal Albert Hall. At this concert he performed the Deiro Concerto and his performance added considerable prestige to the accordion. Mr. Tollefsen is famous for his concert, television, radio and recording work.

In Sweden, where the accordion enjoys such great popularity, we find one of the greatest exponents of the instrument to be Andrew Walter. He is well known as a composer and his accordion concerto made a profound impression at the International European Festival at Spa in Belgium, 1949, when played by Tage Ekwall. Reflections, his suite for accordion and orchestra, is yet another major work destined to widely influence the development of serious original music for accordion.

In France, rich in accordion artists, a great name is that of V. Marceau. Born in Lille, in 1902, Marceau is a pioneer of the accordion and began to play at the early age of seven. Later, he studied theory at the National Conservatory. He made a great reputation for his virtuosity and fine musicianship and many came from far and wide to hear him play. Marceau's compositions for the accordion are more often played in France than those of any other composer. He has more than four hundred to his credit.

Italy, the seed from which has sprung so many of our great artists, can boast of many distinguished accordion-

ists. One name that stands out is that of L. O. Anzaghi, often called "A Supreme Master of the Accordion."

Besides having a great and famous school in Milan, Anzaghi can claim much credit for contributing voluminously to the accordion repertoire. His original compositions, studies, arrangement and transcriptions of the classics are in themselves gems.

In Rome we find another famous artist and composer, Luigi Lanaro. He has a widely known Accordion Academy there with branches in other cities.

And thus we have a picture, although an incomplete one by far, of some of the great exponents of the accordion here and abroad. Apologies are offered to the many, many artists who were not mentioned, due to the fact that literature concerning them was not available to the author.

The accordion has many friends among the greats in other fields of music. Here is a story about one such artist:

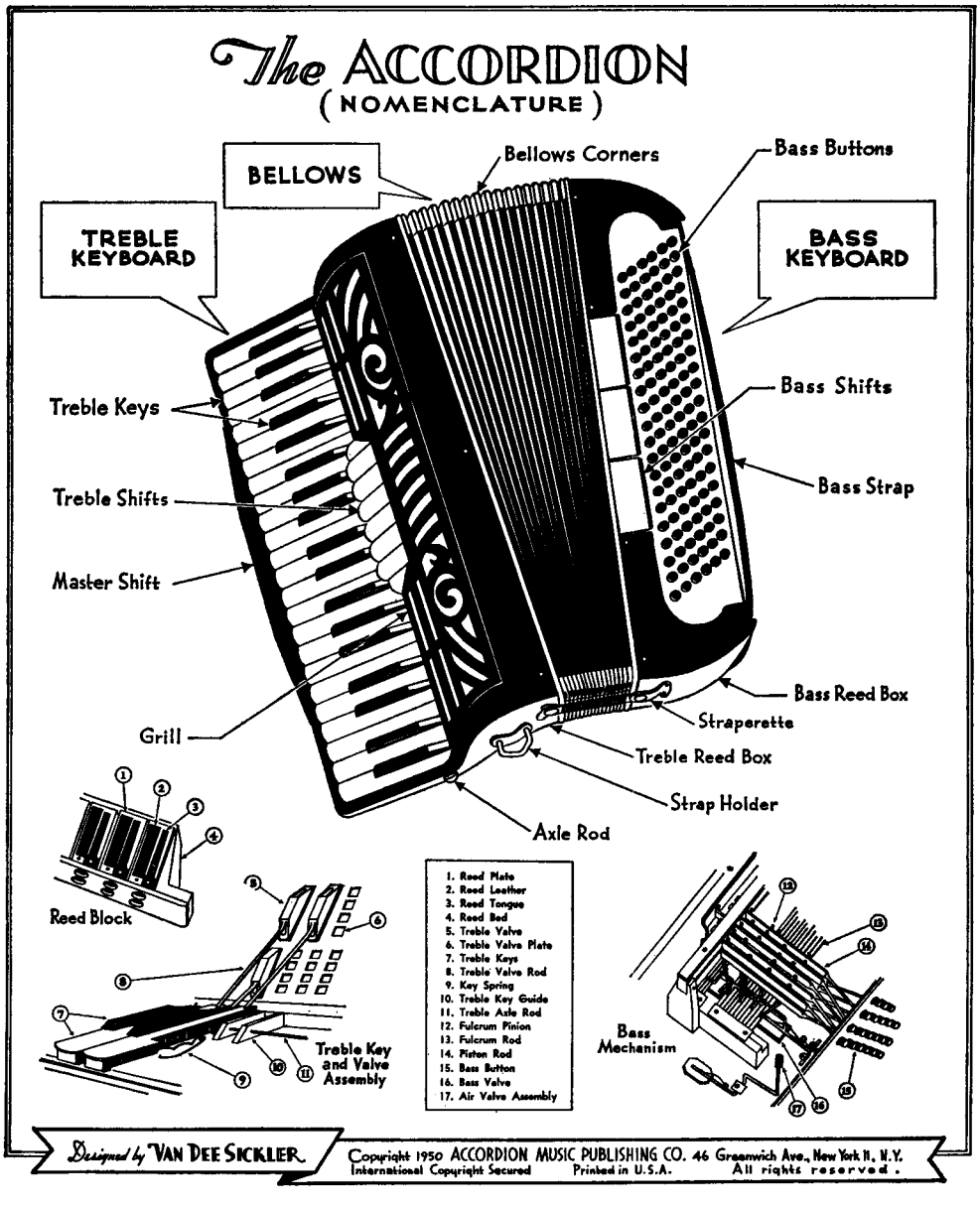
> Off the Coast of Balboa, California, a gathering of boats were sailing about in an unusually small space, considering the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. From yachts lying near at hand, motor boats and row boats kept trying to keep near one particular boat. The solution of the mystery was — a man sitting on deck was playing an accordion! Presently a particularly luxurious yacht hove to, and an elderly gentleman invited the "young man" to join him in a few accordion duets. He too confessed he played the accordion. The "young man"

obliged, and after a half hour of pleasant ensemble work the yacht owner remarked:

"You seem to have a very musical ear! May I ask your name."

"Jascha Heifetz," replied the younger man, acknowledging the compliment to his musical ability with a smile.

The accordion is no passing fancy for Heifetz since it invites a source of pleasure and relaxation for this famous violinist.


The ACCORDION
(NOMENCLATURE)
BELLOWS
Bellows Corners
Bass Buttons
TREBLE KEYBOARD
BASS KEYBOARD
Treble Keys
Bass Shifts
Treble Shifts
Bass Strap
Master Shift
Bass Reed Box
Straperette
Grill
Treble Reed Box
Strap Holder
Axle Rod
Reed Block
Treble Key and Valve Assembly
Bass Mechanism
1. Reed Plate
2. Reed Leather
3. Reed Tongue
4. Reed Bed
5. Treble Valve
6. Treble Valve Plate
7. Treble Keys
8. Treble Valve Rod
9. Key Spring
10. Treble Key Guide
11. Treble Axle Rod
12. Fulcrum Pinion
13. Fulcrum Rod
14. Piston Rod
15. Bass Button
16. Bass Valve
17. Air Valve Assembly
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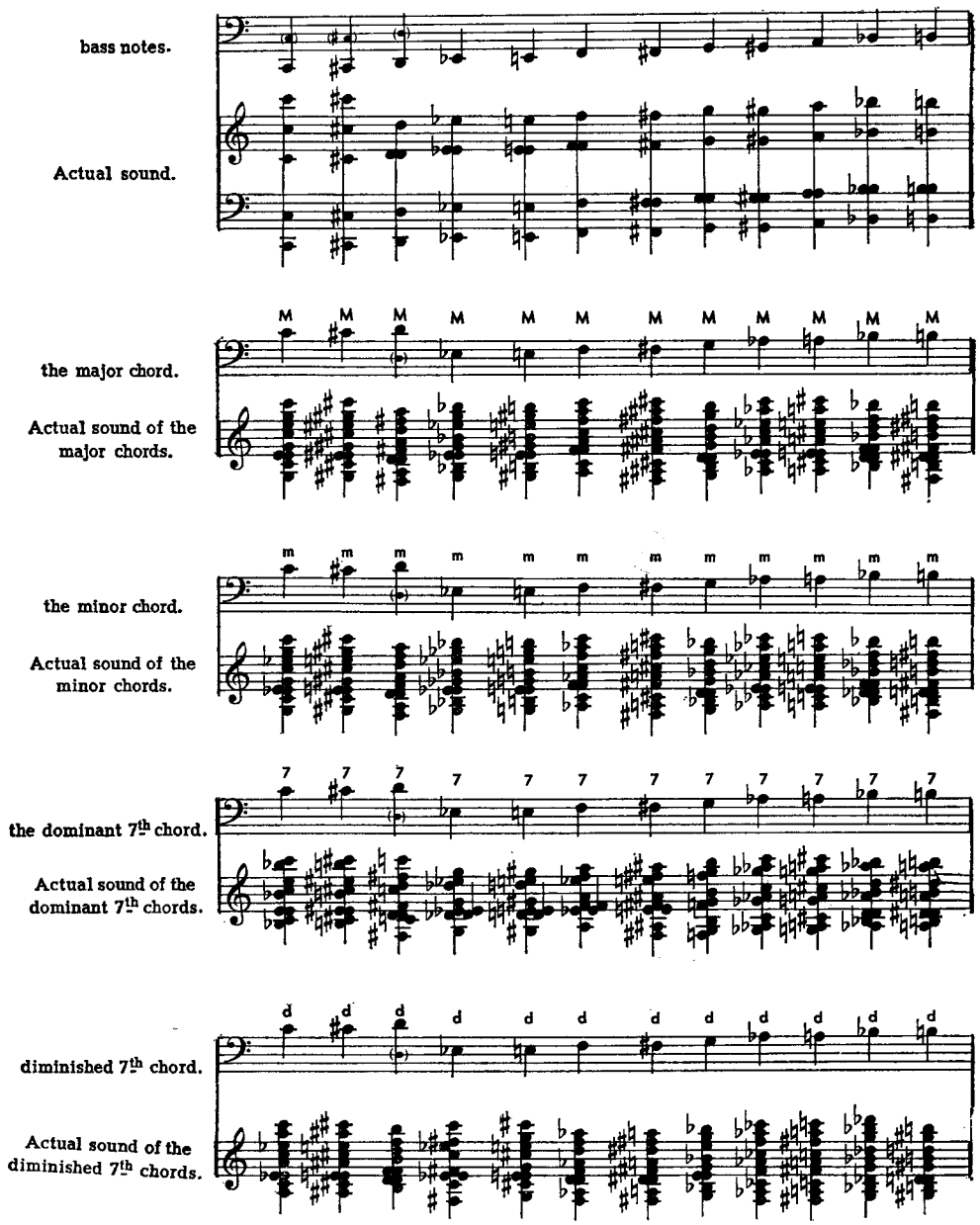
ACTUAL NOTES THAT THE BASS AND CHORD BUTTONS SOUND



PREVIOUS REGISTER TERMINOLOGY OF RIGHT HAND

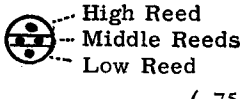
OFF	S OFF	H HIGH REED	O OTTAVINO
R ON	F ON	M MEDIUM REED	V VIBRATO
		L LOW REED	M MEZZO SOPRANO
			B BARITONE

——— The Standard System of Register Notation for the Right Hand.———

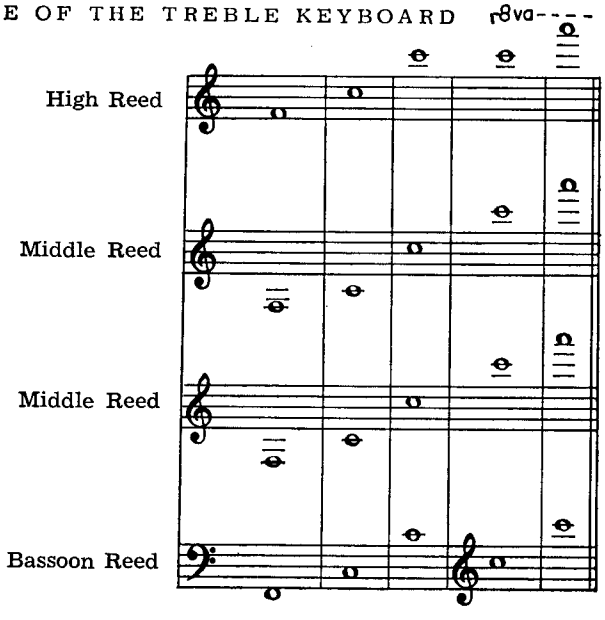
Agreed upon in 1955 that the accordion manufacturers would place the name of the instrument and symbol on the register or grille of the accordion while music publishers would use either the symbol or register name.

Register Name	∤ Symbol	* Reeds that Respond
Master		L M M H
Accordion		L M M
Musette		M M H
Harmonium		L M H
Violin		M M
Organ		L H
Bandoneon		L M
Oboe		M H
Clarinet		M
Piccolo		H
Bassoon		L

* L. Low Reed M. Middle Reed H. High Reed



TONAL RANGE OF THE TREBLE KEYBOARD



TONAL RANGE OF THE BASS KEYBOARD

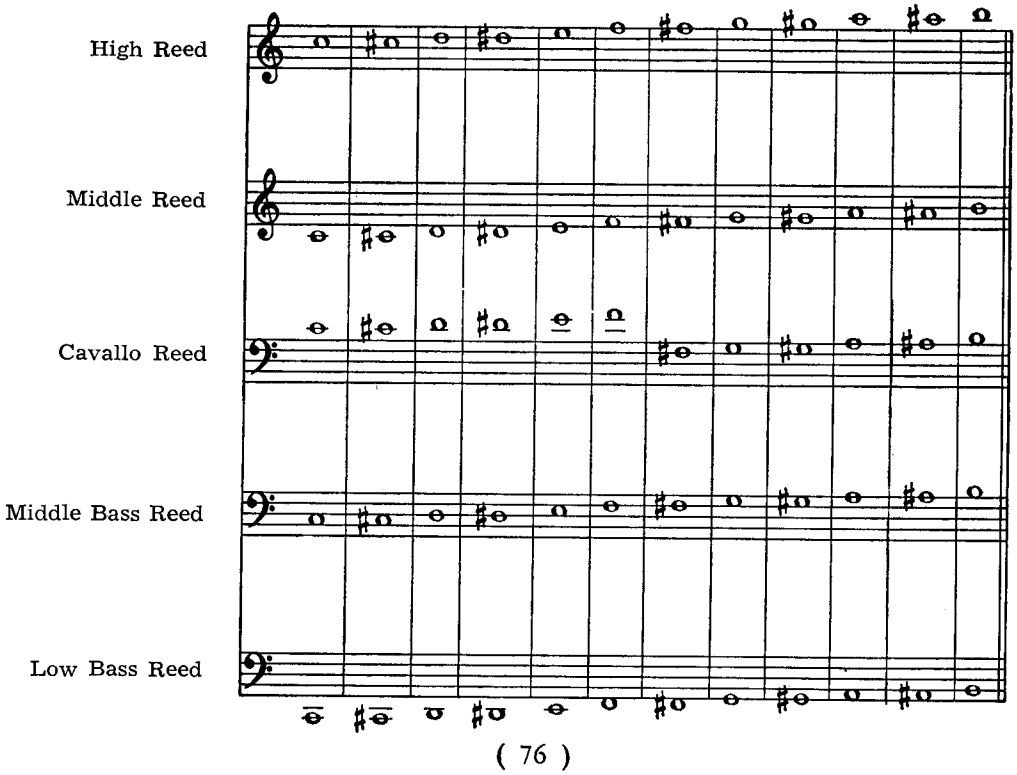
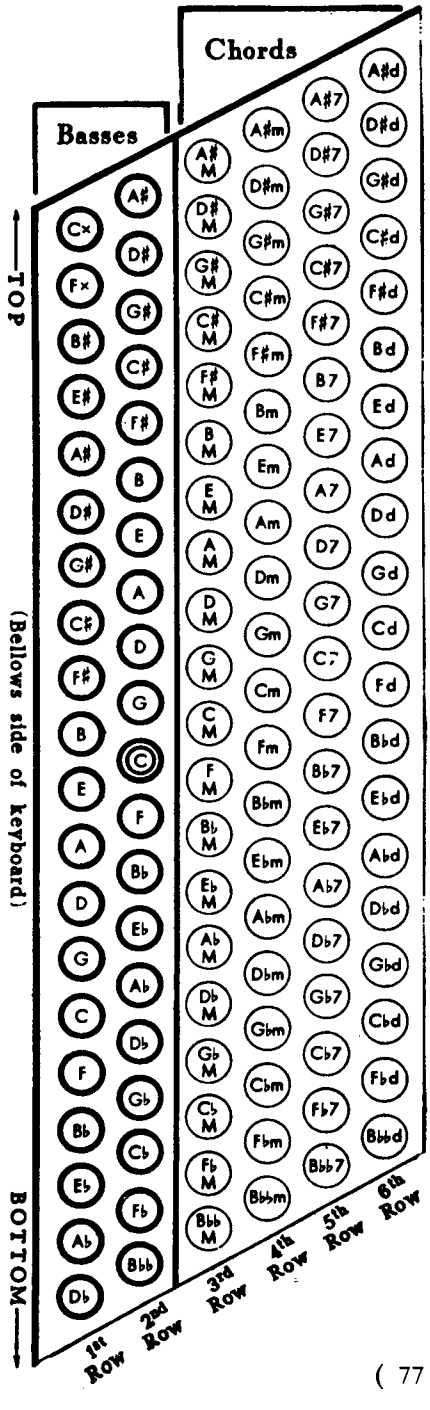


CHART OF THE BASSES



1st Row — Counter Basses

2nd Row — Fundamental Basses

3rd Row — Major Chords

4th Row — Minor Chords

5th Row — Dominant 7th Chords

6th Row — Diminished 7th Chords

THE ACCORDION

By Toni Charuhas Meekins

Editor's Note: Written almost 40 years ago, Toni's extraordinary book, The Accordion, was originally published under her maiden name Charuhas. In this chapter reprint, we have updated the author's byline with her married name (Meekins), while retaining the name Charuhas for subsequent personal references. Toni Charuhas researched and wrote this information in the early 1950s during graduate school. She submitted it to the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, The Catholic University of America, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Music. Her master's thesis was published in 1955 by the Accordion Music Publishing Company owned by Pietro Deiro, Jr. I wish to thank Toni Charuhas and Pietro Deiro, Jr., for permission to reprint the first chapter of the book, The Accordion, the Introduction by Pietro Deiro, Jr., and Toni's biography and photo. This book has been out of print since 1972, so we are especially proud to republish a portion of it, as it is a significant piece of research about the historical roots of the accordion. This research by Toni Charuhas truly deserves a place in accordion history as it typifies some scholarly research about this beloved instrument. After several readers wrote to us suggesting that we include a brief history of the accordion's development in our next edition, we contacted Pietro Deiro, Jr., for permission to include Toni Charuhas' well-written historical account. Fortunately, we received his signed permission just before this revised edition went to print. Another suggestion received from readers was that we should include a diagram of the internal working parts of an accordion. After searching through many accordion catalogs, we found a fully disassembled accordion in an old Excelsior catalog. We have included the reproduction at the conclusion of this article, and we are especially grateful to Mario Pancotti, Excelsior Accordions, Inc. of New York City, for his kind permission to use it.

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INTRODUCTION BY PIETRO DEIRO, JR.

The origin and development of the accordion has always presented a subject of intrigue and a challenge to accordion enthusiasts. In this complete text, the author proceeds from its origin in China through the Roman and Greek eras, where it associates with other instruments, long since faded, and finally emerges as the piano accordion that we so affectionately call a miniature organ.

It contains a wealth of information on the accordion, its history, its construction, and its ideals. Although it is primarily written for accordion lovers, it is exceptionally fitted for those just beginning to become conscious of the potentialities of the accordion as a true musical instrument. You will be astonished at what it discloses, that is, what a world of difference it can be between just playing the accordion and knowing intelligently both its history and ideals.

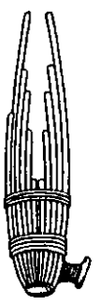
CHAPTER I — ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The modern piano accordion is rapidly making great strides in the legitimate musical world. From a novelty instrument played on ferryboats, in taverns and at square dances, it has made its way into conservatories, universities, schools, concert halls and symphony orchestras. Just as there can be no comparison of the first crude water organ of yesterday to the magnificent pipe organ of today, so there cannot be a comparison between the first clumsy accordion of the early 19th century to the rich and sensitive instrument of the present. It took many years for the organ to develop; the piano accordion, as such, is practically a "baby" in the world of musical instruments, although, relatively speaking, it has had a tremendous growth and development in a very short time. In spite of the fact that in its present state it can well hold its place as a complete and satisfying solo instrument, its manufacturers are constantly seeking to improve

and perfect it. Before discussing the present day accordion, let us turn back the pages of time and trace it to its origin.

One might be under the impression that the accordion is a new instrument just recently invented and that its history could not date back very far, at most perhaps a little over a century. This is not so, for one of the parts of the accordion dates back to centuries before Christ. We say "parts" because the piano accordion is made up of many varied components. It utilizes the principle of the free reed; it has bellows, a keyboard, push-buttons, and it is portable. Each of these items may be traced to different eras in antiquity. In order to get a complete picture of the piano accordion it would be well to go to its very beginning and follow its evolution up to its present state.

The Cheng



The seed from which the accordion was eventually to evolve is to be found in the Cheng. This instrument is an ancient Chinese instrument which can be traced to mythical times in China. It is played by blowing into a wooden mouthpiece which is attached to a gourd and into which is fitted 17 bamboo pipes of different lengths. The exact date of the first Cheng is unknown although Curt Sachs, the noted librarian and historian, states that in China its invention is attributed to Emperor Nya-Kwa in the third millennium before Christ. It was invented as an imitation of the bird Phoenix with its body, head and wings. It is not mentioned before about 1100 B.C., and no earlier picture of it can be found than the one in the University Museum in Philadelphia which is on a votive stele dated 551 A.D. On the other hand, according to tradition in China, music was invented in 2953 B.C. by the first of five divine rulers. His name, Fu-hsi. A mythical female sovereign, said to have been his sister, succeeded him and she has been accredited with the invention of the Cheng. Her name was Nu Wa. But since an invention in Chinese legend and mythology is invariably claimed for some Emperor or Empress, not much heed need be given it. So much for the invention of the Cheng. Let us go on and see how it is made.

Although the Cheng or Sheng (Japanese Sho) originally was made with a gourd, today it is replaced by wood, cut into similar shape. Its neck serves as a mouthpiece and air conduit while its body forms a windchest to feed the pipes. The wind produced from the human lungs enters through the windchest and sets vibrating a free reed. It is this same free reed which produces the sound in an accordion and places it in the category of a reed instrument. In mentioning reed instruments, the historian Geiringer specifies that there are five different kinds of reed instruments, one of which is the kind having a single (hard) freely vibrating reed. This type of reed is known as the free reed. It is called "free" because it has an elastic tongue which vibrates freely within a frame and by its vibrations causes a stream of air to sound. The pitch and quality of the tone is determined by the material of the tongue. Instruments such as the harmonium, the accordion, the mouth organ, etc., employ this type of reed.

Here we have the beginning of our accordion. It still has a long and fascinating journey to travel through the annals of time before we can find it a complete unit. Its various parts will appear in funeral processions in China, wooing games in Bengal (Cheng), in convents as accompaniment to the singing of nuns (in the form of the regal), in the 12th century in England as a secular instrument (portative) and finally before Pope Pius XII to receive its official sanction as an accordion.

Now lets go back to the Cheng with its free reed and follow it to Europe. The Cheng was an instrument sweet enough in tone to charm the most critical and exacting European ears. A single Cheng is capable of playing

harmony, duets or even chords as well as a gentle shake. It has a remote, minute and very sweet tone, somewhat like the tone one would imagine a miniature pipe organ to have. To the Cheng were attributed strange powers, and it was considered a sacred instrument in Confucian temple ceremonies leading the temple orchestra on all feast days.

Before we take the Cheng and leave China, it might be well to mention that its free reeds were cast out of many different kinds of metals and sometimes even fashioned out of gold. They also varied a great deal in shape.

It is said the Cheng could be found in many Asiatic countries and could have been brought to Europe by missionaries or at an earlier date by returning crusaders, or perhaps still earlier by the Asiatic caravans which traveled thousands of miles of desert in their trade routes. However, we do know that in the 18th century the free reed takes a trip to Russia where it meets a musician by the name of Johann Wilde. This Mr Wilde, known as the inventor of the nail violin, purchased or was given a Cheng in St. Petersburg and learned to play it. When the physicist Kratzenstein from Copenhagen heard him and examined the free reed of the Cheng, he suggested to the organ builder Kirschnik in St. Petersburg that he introduce the free reed into the organ. The latter, however, made no organ with free reeds. He only made organ-pianos. It was the well-known Georg Joseph Vogler in Darmstadt who built the first organ with such reeds, and from his free reed organ there sprang a great family of reed instruments such as harmoniums, mouth harmonicas and accordions. All this took place from 1800 on.

Before going into the 19th century with its invention of the accordion, let us see what other phases of the accordion were in previous use. It would be well to trace its bellows and portability. The use of bellows in Greek and Egyptian forges before 1500 B.C. is known. Also there are reports of small, portable, accordion-like organs that have been excavated from ruins.

The earliest report is to be found in two terra-cotta figures unearthed at Susa, in Persia. These figures are said to date from 800 B.C. and represent players upon accordion-like organs.

Also the fragment of a figure of a musician playing upon a small portable instrument firmly fastened to his chest and with one hand appearing to operate a bellows was excavated at Tarsus in Cilicia and dates to about 200 B.C. In Chinese Turkestan on the site of ancient Khotan another figure was found again with the small organ fitted to the player's chest.

Small pneumatic organs which were portable and had hand bellows seem to have been in use amongst the Islamic peoples. An organ described by the Arabic writer, Ibn Ghaibi, is said to have been of the portative type. A supposition exists that Syria had this type of instrument also. It is known that many centuries later, small portatives were introduced to the west by Byzantine envoys to Charlemagne's Court and that these instruments were in all probability made by Syrians or Arabians.

It is also known that to relieve the strain of mouth blowing a primitive hand-bellows was added to the instrument called the Pipes of Pan.

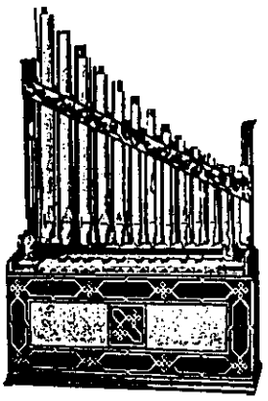
Ancient Rome also seemingly had portable organs, for in a poem ascribed to Virgil (30 B.C.) there is reference made to a woman musician who introduces wind into the pipes of a portative organ by means of a pair of bellows which she holds under her arms and manipulates.

Fragments of a Roman portative organ dating back to 63 A.D. have been excavated at Pompeii (in 1876) and may be found in the Museo Nazionale at Naples. When it was found, it had a chain attached to it long enough to go around a man's neck. It had 3 rows of about 15 rectangularly shaped holes, similar to those securing the free reeds in a concertina, contained in a damaged bronze plate. Since these holes were arranged at irregular intervals, and did not appear conveniently arranged for blowing into by the mouth, it may be inferred that the instrument may have had hand-bellows

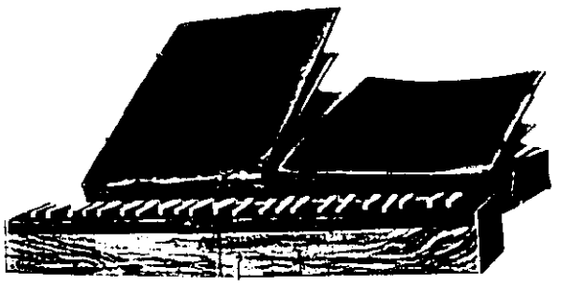
that had perhaps been lost.

The well-known historian of the accordion, Mr Hilding Bergquist, has felt that in all probability as more and more excavations are made that there may be unearthed still more ancestral specimens of instruments containing the characteristics of our accordion family and that specimens embodying all constructional details intact, may conceivably be found some day.

The Portative



In the Middle Ages, there were two predominant portable instruments, the Portative and the Regal, both of which can be related to the accordion family. In Europe the portative made its first recorded appearance in England during the 12th century, and by the 13th century it was distributed all over Western Europe, becoming one of the most important elements in both chamber and orchestral music. Its popularity was no accident, for quite apart from the clearer, pure, mellow tones which would have singular attraction for Renaissance ears, it was remarkable for its technical efficiency, while thanks to its keyboard mechanism it was remarkably easy to play. The portative was a small, portable, and easily playable hand-organ. It was strapped on to the player who operated the lever keys or small push-buttons with the right hand and worked the bellows with the left hand. It was equipped with anywhere from 6 to 30 pipes in one, two or three ranks. The portatives were built with two ranks of keys only to save space, since at that time they had no chromatic scale. Later, in the Renaissance, it invariably was provided with a regular chromatic keyboard furnished with two ranks of keys, and producing all the notes of the chromatic scale. In spite of its improvements, the portative was on its way out, for it was too small, feeble in tone and unsuitable for chord playing to be used in the new Renaissance music. When we reach the Baroque and Rococo periods, we find the portatives in use principally in processions. The portatives have become incomparably heavier, and two or more persons are required to serve them. The added weight stems mostly from the fact that registers were added to them. The portative sometimes was referred to as organeto, and Franceso Landino, the famous medieval Florentine composer and organist, had achieved an interesting reputation through his performance on the instrument. It is quite possible that Landino (1324-1390) may have written music for the portative although no record of such music exists. However, we are told a Michaelangelo Rossi in the 17th century did write a Miniature for a Portative Organ. This composition has been played on the modern organ by E. Power Biggs.



The Bible-Regal

And now let us take a look at the Regal. The Regal is the instrument from which the modern harmonium was modeled, but it had beating reeds instead of free reeds. The beating reed which is employed in the organ derives its name from the fact that the reeds touch the sides of the frames. It was introduced in the 15th century, but it is not known whether it appeared first in the Regal or as part of an organ. References have been made to the Regal being used in convents to accompany the singing nuns.

The Regal received the name Bible-Regal in the 16th century when George Voll of Nuremberg adopted its shape to the form of a Bible-like book when closed. The Bible-Regal

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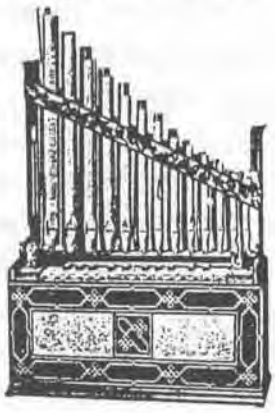

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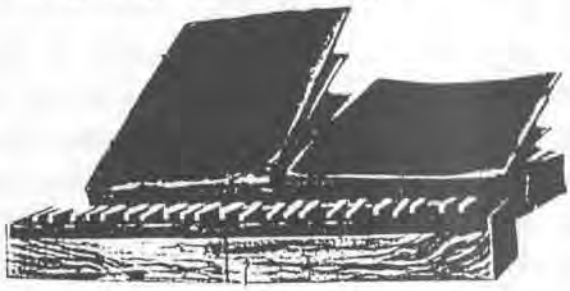

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The Regal received the name Bible-Regal in the 16th century when George Voll of Nuremberg adopted its shape to the form of a Bible-like book when closed. The Bible-Regal

had twin bellows which could be taken off and folded up. In order to make it easy to transport, the folded instrument was packed into the bellows and the closed instrument gave an appearance of a Bible. The Bible-Regal was an instrument well calculated to delight and gratify the people of the 16th century who were inclined to be enthralled and fascinated by unique mechanical wonders.

The Regal was employed in the 17th century chiefly as an instrument for the execution of the thorough-bass. It was peculiarly fitted to accompany a choir of trombones, on account of its powerful, snarling tone. Monteverdi (1567-1643), popular composer of that period, used the Regal in his opera "Orfeo" which was orchestrated for 36 instruments and which is said to have embodied what are still regarded as new conceptions in opera. The 18th century, with its love for the sentimental, took exception to the rigid, harsh, and unaccommodating tone of the Regal. Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), who composed, collected musical biographies and wrote on theory, particularly disliked the Regal which he described with characteristic bluntness as "extremely loathsome." Thus, the Regal was not destined to survive beyond the middle of the 18th century.

In short, we can see that before the 18th century, there were three ancestral instruments of the accordion. The Cheng and the accordion owe their relationship to each other through the fact that their sound is produced by a free reed which vibrates. The difference is that in one the air is created by the human lungs, and in the other by the action of a bellows. The relationship of the accordion to the portative lies in that both are strapped to the player, and the left hand in both operates bellows, while the right hand operates keys or buttons. Their difference lies in the fact that the portative has pipes while the accordion has free reeds.

The Regal and the accordion are related inasmuch as they both are reed instruments, but the Regal has the beating reed while the accordion has the free reed. Both have in common bellows and a keyboard. Music on both the Regal and the portative is created by the right hand only. On the accordion it is created with both hands. The accordion, portative, and regal have bellows, and all three are portable; in that respect, as cousins often do, they outwardly resemble one another. Here their resemblance ends, and we find a truly closer relation in the accordion's true ancestor, the Cheng; for regardless of how the wind on either instrument is produced, the outcome is the sound that can only be created by the vibration of a free reed. This sound differs widely from that produced by other types of reeds, having a unique beauty of its own. When in the 18th century, European organ-builders, acousticians, physicists, etc., heard this remarkable free reed, they obviously were fascinated by it for a wealth of free reed instruments appeared in the early 19th century. These instruments varied in size and type. Some were portable, small and mouth-blown like the "blow accordion," harmonica, aeolina, and symphonion. Others were bellowsed by hand, like the accordion, bandoneon, lap-melodeon, concertina, and rocking melodeon; and still others were large, "organ-like" stationary instruments, such as the seraphine, harmonium, and melodeon.

Some dictionaries attribute the invention of the accordion to Cyrillus Damian of Vienna in 1829. But authorities differ, and the consensus of opinion is that it was first built in 1822 by Friedrich Buschmann of Berlin, and was called the Handaoline. The first accordion, like most new inventions, was clumsy, heavy, and rather ugly in sound. Because of the unique principle of the left hand single bass buttons producing fixed chords, it was named Accordion by the above named Damian. This early and rather crude accordion had an oblong form and had four buttons on the bass. Each button acted on two reeds and encompassed one octave in the diatonic scale. These buttons were so arranged that each note could be accompanied by a tonic or dominant harmony.

When additions were made later of the chromatic scale, the instrument was capable of a more varied melody and harmony. In its beginning, the accordion operated on the same principle of the harmonica, that is, it played one tone when blowing and another when drawing. That type of accordion was known and still is known as a semi-tone accordion. However, this system has been eliminated and now the accordion plays the same tone whether the bellows are being opened or closed.

A contemporary instrument of the accordion was the concertina. This instrument was invented by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1829 and at first called the "Symphonion with Bellows." It was submitted to public notice in June, 1833 and on December 27 of that year was renamed the "concertina."

The concertina rapidly became a complete concert instrument with many concerti being written for it and numerous virtuosi appearing to perform them. In pathetic contrast, the accordion made very little progress and although the application of the piano keyboard was made by Bouton of Paris in 1852, the piano accordion did not come into popular use until the beginning of the 20th century.

Let us take a look at the many kinds of accordions that appeared during the 19th century. Upon hearing the accordion, the various European instrument manufacturers decided to make some themselves and as a result, many different systems of key orders were evolved, such as the Dutch, French, Belgian, German, Italian, Russian, etc.

The German type of accordion, known also as melodeon, had up to four registers and had as a rule 2 basses and one row of ten treble keys. Later it had 2 rows of 19 treble keys and four basses. The early Italian type had 4 basses with one row of 10 treble keys or two rows of approximately 21 treble keys with 8 basses. This type had no registers. Both the German and Italian types were also made in chromatic tuning, and from these instruments developed the chromatic accordion.

In 1882 a new type of keyboard appeared for the piano. It was invented by Paul von Janko. This keyboard consisted of six rows of short keys elevated slightly over each other in step formation. In all probability this was the keyboard from which European accordion keyboard designers evolved their own modified versions of key formations. These systems are known as chromatic since they facilitate the execution of the chromatic scale.

Going back to the early accordion, it is said that the intonation of the scale to which they were tuned was thought to be neither tempered nor untempered. The sound of the instrument caused acousticians to marvel and acclaim it a fortunate chance of mechanical invention. This peculiar accordion scale they claimed always had been in the nature and rationale of music and existed long before the advent of the accordion.

As early as 1850 the accordion was given chromatic notes by Walter, a Viennese, but it seemingly had no uniform-tone at that time. It is stated that in 1892, Armand Loriaux, a Belgian, first gave the accordion uniform-tone. It is probably from around that time that our chromatic step formation keyboards of the type known today first appeared in Europe. Other chromatic keyboard arrangements, however, had several equally arranged rows of small, round buttons, constructed so as to be depressed into the keyboard, and so differing in this respect from the step-formation keyboard, although the fingering was the same.

The chromatic accordion had three rows of treble buttons. Modern chromatic button accordions can possess 102 treble buttons in five banks giving a range of five octaves — rows four and five duplicating rows one and two, respectively, to allow alternative fingering.

The bass section of the accordion was being developed and from one fundamental bass row (single tones) and major chord row, other rows were added until we have our present standard bass keyboard which has, besides the two rows mentioned, a row of minor chords, a row of seventh chords, a row of diminished chords, and an added row of

single tones called the counter-bass row. There are also 140 bass accordions with an added minor counter bass row. To this 140 bass may be added a row of augmented chords forming a 160 bass accordion. Both these types are in use by some professional players, but the 120 bass accordion is the standard.

It can readily be seen that to present a complete picture of the evolution of the accordion family of instruments would be a tremendous undertaking and one far too enormous in scope to be encompassed in one volume.

Even today there exist several types of accordions. In Europe the chromatic accordion is still in use, although it is rapidly being overtaken by the piano accordion. At present the most popular and widely used and manufactured accordion is the piano accordion, and it is with this type of accordion we will concern ourselves. ***[Editor's Note: The author's assessment of the popularity of the piano accordion vs the chromatic accordion was stated in 1955 when her article first appeared. Indeed, the author would likely offer a different comparative assessment today as the chromatic accordion is still the predominant accordion in Europe.]***

Although the first piano accordion originated in Europe during the second half of the 19th century, it did not appear in America until 1909. At this time Pietro Deiro introduced his improved piano accordion and was the first to play one before a public audience. This historical event occurred at the Washington Square Theatre in San Francisco. In 1910 commercial manufacture of accordions commenced but they were not produced by mass production until approximately 1918. It is a well known fact that we owe the improvement of the piano keyboard as it exists on the piano accordion today to Pietro Deiro. He improved the accordion piano keyboard by enlarging the keys in both length and width. Originally the keys were quite narrow and were 2 1/2 to 3 inches in length.

As we view our present piano accordion, we find it far removed from the primitive, crude instrument first invented and called an accordion. It is no longer cumbersome and clumsy to play. The accordion of today is fast becoming accepted as an instrument of true value and merit, and we find, as a result of its new found prestige, that several contemporary composers already have written concertos for accordion and orchestra some of which have been performed by a number of our great symphony orchestras.

It is truly an instrument worthy of consideration and recognition as we shall see as we go on further to discuss its merits and possibilities. [End of Chapter]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - TONI CHARUHAS

Toni Charuhas, an accordionist since the age of twelve, experienced her greatest disappointment only when refused permission to major in the accordion during her college years. Selecting the pipe organ in its place, she entered the Catholic University of America and acquired a Bachelor's Degree in Music. Not content with her laurels, Toni started immediately on a Master's Degree. It was at this time that her ambition for accordion came to the fore, and she used the subject "The Accordion" as a thesis. Its approval and enthusiastic comments by the faculty led to its publication two years later.

During her college studies, Toni continued with her interest in the accordion and studied with such notables as Sylvia Kaplowitz, Joseph Biviano, and Mr Lanaro in Rome, Italy. [She performed] with various concert ensembles in and around Washington, D.C., her birthplace.

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Even today there exist several types of accordions. In Europe the chromatic accordion is still in use, although it is rapidly being overtaken by the piano accordion. At present the most popular and widely used and manufactured accordion is the piano accordion, and it is with this type of accordion we will concern ourselves. ***[Editor's Note: The author's assessment of the popularity of the piano accordion vs the chromatic accordion was stated in 1955 when her article first appeared. Indeed, the author would likely offer a different comparative assessment today as the chromatic accordion is still the predominant accordion in Europe.]***

Although the first piano accordion originated in Europe during the second half of the 19th century, it did not appear in America until 1909. At this time Pietro Deiro introduced his improved piano accordion and was the first to play one before a public audience. This historical event occurred at the Washington Square Theatre in San Francisco. In 1910 commercial manufacture of accordions commenced but they were not produced by mass production until approximately 1918. It is a well known fact that we owe the improvement of the piano keyboard as it exists on the piano accordion today to Pietro Deiro. He improved the accordion piano keyboard by enlarging the keys in both length and width. Originally the keys were quite narrow and were 2 1/2 to 3 inches in length.

As we view our present piano accordion, we find it far removed from the primitive, crude instrument first invented and called an accordion. It is no longer cumbersome and clumsy to play. The accordion of today is fast becoming accepted as an instrument of true value and merit, and we find, as a result of its new found prestige, that several contemporary composers already have written concertos for accordion and orchestra some of which have been performed by a number of our great symphony orchestras.

It is truly an instrument worthy of consideration and recognition as we shall see as we go on further to discuss its merits and possibilities. [End of Chapter]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - TONI CHARUHAS

Toni Charuhas, an accordionist since the age of twelve, experienced her greatest disappointment only when refused permission to major in the accordion during her college years. Selecting the pipe organ in its place, she entered the Catholic University of America and acquired a Bachelor's Degree in Music. Not content with her laurels, Toni started immediately on a Master's Degree. It was at this time that her ambition for accordion came to the fore, and she used the subject "The Accordion" as a thesis. Its approval and enthusiastic comments by the faculty led to its publication two years later.

During her college studies, Toni continued with her interest in the accordion and studied with such notables as Sylvia Kaplowitz, Joseph Biviano, and Mr Lanaro in Rome, Italy. [She performed] with various concert ensembles in and around Washington, D.C., her birthplace.

Shown on this page are some of the 3526 parts that are custom-fitted in the creation of each accordion. Little wonder that it takes such a long time to construct an accordion as each part has to be expertly fitted together to assure the perfect operation of the instrument.

THE INTERNAL MECHANISMS OF AN ACOUSTIC ACCORDION (Used with the kind permission of Mario Pancotti, Excelsior Accordion Company of New York.)