

that “Jon Corbino was never soft, and he didn’t die softly” (184). This is apparently a euphemistic reference to the night sweats, coughing fits, and convulsive spasms that beset Corbino in his last, heavily medicated days. Here, as elsewhere, the authors’ choice of phrasing borders on the glib and insensitive. Despite such flaws, which are considerable, the Londravilles’ book laudably begins to fill a gap in our record of a twentieth-century American artist who painted well, even gloriously so.

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Squeeze This! A Cultural History of the Accordion in America.

By Marion Jacobson.

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288 pages.

“With only one instrument, you can travel the world.” Thus begins Marion Jacobson’s fascinating exploration of the piano accordion’s history, diverse cultural meanings, and multifaceted musical and social roles in the United States over the last century. A chance encounter in a Lower East Side accordion store—where she was dazzled and inspired by the musical possibilities offered by the instrument—led Jacobson on a decade-long journey across the United States investigating the piano accordion’s past and present in all strata of society, a physical and metaphorical journey that has culminated in this valuable book. Throughout, the accordion is presented as a symbol of ethnic and national identity, a reflection of shared cultural values, and, simultaneously, a way for diverse groups of people to engage in dialog with audiences and fellow musicians across the nation, whether they use the instrument to perform polkas, tarantellas, Bach, or rock.

New York City, itself a microcosm of U.S. society, is Jacobson’s home base and constant point of reference; she holds a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from New York University (where this project began as a doctoral dissertation) and frequently performs in the city. From this starting point, the book takes the reader on a remarkable tour of accordion communities from San Francisco to Houston to the Midwest. Jacobson’s conversational style, wide-ranging subject, and wealth of ethnographic analysis make the book appealing and engaging for scholars and casual readers alike; fans of *They Might Be Giants* and Balkan-music aficionados will find as much relevant and thought-provoking material as will those who grew up watching the *Lawrence Welk Show* or singing along to Valtaro songs in New York’s Italian neighborhoods. A scholarly audience will be particularly interested in her methods and successful application of a wide range of theoretical material to her ethnographically diverse and geographically scattered subjects.

Readers of Italian descent will no doubt be aware of their community’s contributions to the worldwide accordion industry, both as manufacturers and as virtuoso performers. Jacobson’s study will be of particular interest to this audience for both

its exhaustive historical review of Italian and Italian-American accordion makers—many of whom had a decisive effect on musical tastes and styles across Europe and the United States through their ingenuity and constant innovations—and for its nuanced biographical treatment of several prominent twentieth-century Italian-American virtuosi, such as the brothers Guido and Pietro Deiro, Pietro Frosini, John Brugnoli, and others.

In the introduction, Jacobson recounts the experiences as a musician and listener that drew her to the accordion, explains how she transformed her curiosity into a full-blown ethnographic and ethnomusicological research project, and lays out the theoretical foundation of the study. She engages with a wealth of classic and recent work in ethnomusicology and anthropology, citing the writings of James Clifford, Arjun Appadurai, Kevin Dawe, and Andrew Bennett, among others, and focuses on the accordion as “a thing with a complex ‘social life,’ career, and networks of exchange” (5). Accordingly, she approaches the accordion as a “cultural technology,” a “network of circulating objects and relationships involving musical skills and a means of organizing cultural work” (6). This is the orientation that guides the course of the book, as she explores the many ways in which the manufacture, design, and marketing of the accordion and its consumption by the American public have contributed to its cultural significance as much as the actual music played on and associated with it. From this perspective, one of the more interesting themes explored is the accordion’s gradual transition from an immigrant instrument in the early twentieth century to a shiny, ultramodern musical machine representing mainstream 1950s white America—a product of what Jacobson calls the “accordion industrial complex” (52). From there, Jacobson shows us, the accordion became a symbol of banal decadence and nostalgic schmaltz after the triumph of rock ‘n’ roll and finally achieved its recent resurgence of popularity in the postpunk era, when it has been embraced by the counterculture as well as the mainstream as a compelling, warm, and physically engaging instrument.

Chapter 1 traces the history of the accordion from its beginnings in mid-nineteenth-century Europe through its introduction to the United States in the early twentieth century. Jacobson explains the details of accordion design and function, the difference between the piano accordion and the diatonic button accordions that it largely displaced, its paramount importance in vaudeville, and the issues surrounding innovations in construction and aesthetics. The role of Italian manufacturers, particularly the factories in the town of Castelfidardo (Ancona province, the Marches) and their astoundingly prolific production, is explored in detail along with the role played by Italian immigrants to the United States in the dissemination of the accordion in this country, both as performers and entrepreneurs who opened factories and shops in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago. Jacobson profiles important vaudeville performers such as the Deiro brothers, and she discusses the accordion’s role in dance bands, the recording industry, and radio.

Next, Jacobson details how the mass-produced accordion made a transition into mainstream American society through accordion schools, method books, clever marketing, and inclusion in programs of “highbrow” classical music. Chapter 2 begins with accordionist Charles Magnante’s symbolic “invasion” of Carnegie Hall in 1939. The American Accordion Association’s role in organizing and promoting competitions and providing a network of instructors and performance opportunities is shown to

have been decisive toward this goal, as was the decision to market the accordion as a sleek symbol of American ingenuity in the World War II era. Jacobson explains how the accordion's move away from ethnic enclaves and into classical and popular music resulted in its entry into not only thousands of American homes, where it was played by men, women, and young children, but also into conservatories and concert halls.

Chapter 3 details the accordion's rise to the level of pop stardom with the likes of Dick Contino, its increasing familiarity to the white middle class through the careers of Lawrence Welk and Myron Floren, and its eventual fall from popularity as American youth embraced rock 'n' roll. Jacobson shows how accordion manufacturers and educators failed to respond adequately to changing issues of taste, image, and cost in the 1960s, resulting in the accordion being displaced by cheaper and more fashionable instruments like the electric guitar and keyboard.

In Chapter 4, Jacobson profiles three accordionists who rose from their respective ethnic communities to national fame: Finnish-American Viola Turpeinen; Italian-American John Brugnoli, pioneer of New York City's unique Italian "Valtaro" style; and Slovenian-American Frankie Yankovic ("The Polka King"). All three artists demonstrated success in taking their inherited traditions and transforming them into culturally and economically successful "refolklorized" products that crossed social and ethnic lines.

The "accordion revival" of the 1980s and 1990s is the subject of Chapter 5, in which Jacobson shows how artists such as They Might Be Giants, Those Darn Accordions, "Weird Al" Yankovic, Carl Finch, and Guy Klucevsek used the instrument as a subversively creative tool for social commentary and musical exploration. She invokes David Byrne's characterization of acoustic instruments as "machines of joy" (163) to explain the appeal of the accordion to audiences and musicians alienated by the electronically produced sounds of the disco and techno era.

Finally, Jacobson evaluates the degree to which the accordion has found a place in the daily lives of American music lovers by discussing accordion clubs, festivals, and music scenes in Texas and California. Emphasizing the "grassroots" character of these local scenes, where individual citizens join together to share their love of the instrument and a diversity of musical styles—including Czech-Texan, Zydeco, Celtic rock, and cabaret—Jacobson demonstrates in Chapter 6 how the accordion has become not only an important means of forming and interrogating group identity but also a symbol with even farther-reaching political and cultural capital.

Jacobson concludes by offering some thoughts on issues of power, gender, cultural authority, and the often playful use of cultural tropes surrounding the accordion's use in popular music in America. She analyzes the accordion as a means of community-building and connecting to a real and imagined heritage, contemplates its ideologically complex role in the "world music" scene of the last several decades, and speculates on the future of the instrument as its ever-increasing presence in popular music and a new wave of affordable Chinese-made accordions make it even more accessible to the general public.

The book is enhanced by a wealth of color and black-and-white photographs, many—including historic promotional photos and gorgeous plates of vintage instruments—culled from private archives and the World of Accordions Museum in Superior, Wisconsin. The volume contains some minor editorial errors that occasionally

confound the reader but do not detract from the experience as a whole. Ethnographically rich, compellingly written, and resting on a solid theoretical and methodological foundation, Marion Jacobson's cultural history of the accordion is a welcome addition to the extant literature on popular music, free-reed instruments, and cultural and diaspora studies.

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The Godfather Effect: Changing Hollywood, America, and Me
By Tom Santopietro.
New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2012.
337 pages.

The title of Tom Santopietro's *The Godfather Effect: Changing Hollywood, America, and Me* makes a wide-ranging promise to study the influences both Mario Puzo's novel and Francis Ford Coppola's epic film trilogy have had on moviemaking, American culture, and the author himself. It is a tantalizing promise but one that is, at best, only partially fulfilled. Santopietro's often genial prose is chock-full of anecdotes from his family history (and from Hollywood) and broad commentary on the Italian-American experience, all set in relation to the Corleone saga. But the rigor and complexity necessary to sustain yet another book-length inquiry into the rich meanings of that story, much less the dexterity to integrate family memoir into a historicized interpretation of it, are largely missing here.

The book comprises a series of loosely connected essays on topics ranging from the expected ("The Lure of the Corleones" or "*The Godfather: Part II*") to the oddly impressionistic ("Religion, Death, and Grief" and "Frank Sinatra"). Both this looseness and this impressionism consistently undermine the development of Santopietro's stated thesis that Puzo and Coppola jointly "succeeded in delivering nothing less than the Italianization of American culture" (7). *The Godfather*, in either or both of its generic incarnations (Santopietro does not always distinguish between them), is ostensibly a central issue: Whatever historical material or personal narrative enters Santopietro's analysis intends to demonstrate the rootedness of the Corleone saga in the American experience, past and present. Indeed, without *The Godfather* in both the title and the pages of this work, Santopietro's excursions into history and memoir would likely not have made their way into print. Too often, however, I found myself thinking of the old (and ill-advised) method for testing the doneness of pasta: Throw it against the wall and see if it will stick. Over 285 pages, a lot gets thrown at *The Godfather*, and not enough of it sticks.

Santopietro's work is most fully realized when he recounts the backstory of Coppola's trilogy. Here, Hollywood anecdotes are entertainingly mixed with appreciative observations of the extraordinary craftsmen who turned a potboiler novel into cinematic art. If much of this material is available elsewhere, it nonetheless provides the book with its