



The Accordion in the Americas: Klezmer, Polka, Tango, Zydeco, and More! (Music in American Life)

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An invention of the Industrial Revolution, the accordion provided the less affluent with an inexpensive, loud, portable, and durable "one-man-orchestra" capable of producing melody, harmony, and bass all at once. Imported from Europe into the Americas, the accordion with its distinctive sound became a part of the aural landscape for millions of people but proved to be divisive: while the accordion formed an integral part of working-class musical expression, bourgeois commentators often derided it as vulgar and tasteless.

This rich collection considers the accordion and its myriad forms, from the concertina, button accordion, and piano accordion familiar in European and North American music to the exotic-sounding South American bandoneón and the sanfonia. Capturing the instrument's spread and adaptation to many different cultures in North and South America, contributors illuminate how the accordion factored into power struggles over aesthetic values between elites and working-class people who often were members of immigrant and/or marginalized ethnic communities. Specific histories and cultural contexts discussed include the accordion in Brazil, Argentine tango, accordion traditions in Colombia, cross-border accordion culture between Mexico and Texas, Cajun and Creole identity, working-class culture near Lake Superior, the virtuoso Italian-American and Klezmer accordions, Native American dance music, and American avant-garde.

Contributors are María Susana Azzi, Egberto Bermúdez, Mark DeWitt, Joshua Horowitz, Sydney Hutchinson, Marion Jacobson, James P. Leary, Megwen Loveless, Richard March, Cathy Ragland, Helena Simonett, Jared Snyder, Janet L. Sturman, and Christine F. Zinni.

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