

# Accordion

**Accordions** (from 19th-century German *Akkordeon*, from *Akkord*—"musical chord, concord of sounds"<sup>[1]</sup>) are a family of box-shaped musical instruments of the bellows-driven free-reed aerophone type, colloquially referred to as a squeezebox. A person who plays the accordion is called an *accordionist*. The concertina and bandoneón are related; the harmonium and American reed organ are in the same family.

The instrument is played by compressing or expanding the bellows while pressing buttons or keys, causing *pallets* to open, which allow air to flow across strips of brass or steel, called *reeds*. These vibrate to produce sound inside the body. Valves on opposing reeds of each note are used to make the instrument's reeds sound louder without air leaking from each reed block.<sup>[notes 1]</sup> The performer normally plays the melody on buttons or keys on the right-hand manual, and the accompaniment, consisting of bass and pre-set chord buttons, on the left-hand manual.

The accordion is widely spread across the world. In some countries (for example Brazil,<sup>[2][3]</sup> Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Panama) it is used in popular music (for example Gaucho, Forró and Sertanejo in Brazil, Vallenato in Colombia, and norteño in Mexico), whereas in other regions (such as Europe, North America and other countries in South America) it tends to be more used for dance-pop and folk music and is often used in folk music in Europe, North America and South America. In Europe and North America, some popular music acts also make use of the instrument. Additionally, the accordion is used in cajun, zydeco, jazz music and in both solo and orchestral performances of classical music. The piano accordion is the official city instrument of San Francisco, California.<sup>[4]</sup> Many conservatories in Europe have classical accordion departments. The oldest name for this group of instruments is *harmonika*, from the Greek *harmonikos*, meaning "harmonic, musical". Today, native versions of the name *accordion* are more common. These names refer to the type of accordion patented by Cyrill Demian, which concerned "automatically coupled chords on the bass side".<sup>[5]</sup>

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**Hornbostel–Sachs classification** 412.132 (Free-reed aerophone)

**Developed** Early 20th century

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Depends on configuration: **Left-hand manual**

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- Diatonic button accordion
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Electronium, MIDI accordion, Roland Virtual Accordion

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## Construction

Accordions have many configurations and types. What may be technically possible to do with one accordion could be impossible with another:

- Some accordions are *bisonoric*, producing different itches depending on the direction of bellows movement
- Others are *unisonoric* and produce the same pitch in both directions. The pitch also depends on its size.
- Some use a chromatic buttonboard for the right-hand manual
- Others use a diatonic buttonboard for the right-hand manual
- Yet others use a piano-style musical keyboard for the right-hand manual
- Some can play in different registers
- Craftsmen and technicians may tune the same registers differently, "personalizing" the end result, such as an organ technician might voice a particular instrument

## Universal components

### Bellows



The Brazilian Forró accordionist Dominginhos

The bellows is the most recognizable part of the instrument, and the primary means of articulation. Similar to a violin's bow, the production of sound in an accordion is in direct proportion to the motion of the player. The bellows is located between the right- and left-hand manuals, and is made from pleated layers of cloth and cardboard, with added leather and metal.<sup>[6]</sup> It is used to create pressure and vacuum, driving air across the internal reeds and producing sound by their vibrations, applied pressure increases the volume.



A diatonic button accordion being played

The keyboard touch is not expressive and does not affect dynamics: all expression is effected through the bellows. Bellows effects include:

- Volume control and fade
- Repeated change of direction ("bellows shake"), which has been popularized by musicians such as Renato Borghete (gaucho music) and Luiz Gonzaga<sup>[7]</sup>, and extensively used in Forró, called *resfulengo* in Brazil
- Constant bellows motion while applying pressure at intervals
- Constant bellows motion to produce clear tones with no resonance
- Using the bellows with the silent air button gives the sound of air moving, which is sometimes used in contemporary compositions particularly for this instrument

## Body

The accordion's body consists of two wooden boxes joined together by the bellows. These boxes house reed chambers for the right- and left-hand manuals. Each side has grilles in order to facilitate the transmission of air in and out of the instrument, and to allow the sound to project better. The grille for the right-hand manual is usually larger and is often shaped for decorative purposes. The right-hand manual is normally used for playing the melody and the left-hand manual for playing the accompaniment; however, skilled players can reverse these roles.<sup>[notes 2]</sup>

The size and weight of an accordion varies depending on its type, layout and playing range, which can be as small as to have only one or two rows of basses and a single octave on the right-hand manual, to the standard 120-bass accordion and through to large and heavy 160-bass free-bass converter models.

## Pallet mechanism

The accordion is an aerophone. The manual mechanism of the instrument either enables the air flow, or disables it.<sup>[notes 3]</sup>



### Bellows-Driven Instruments

Piano accordions · · · 1,2,13

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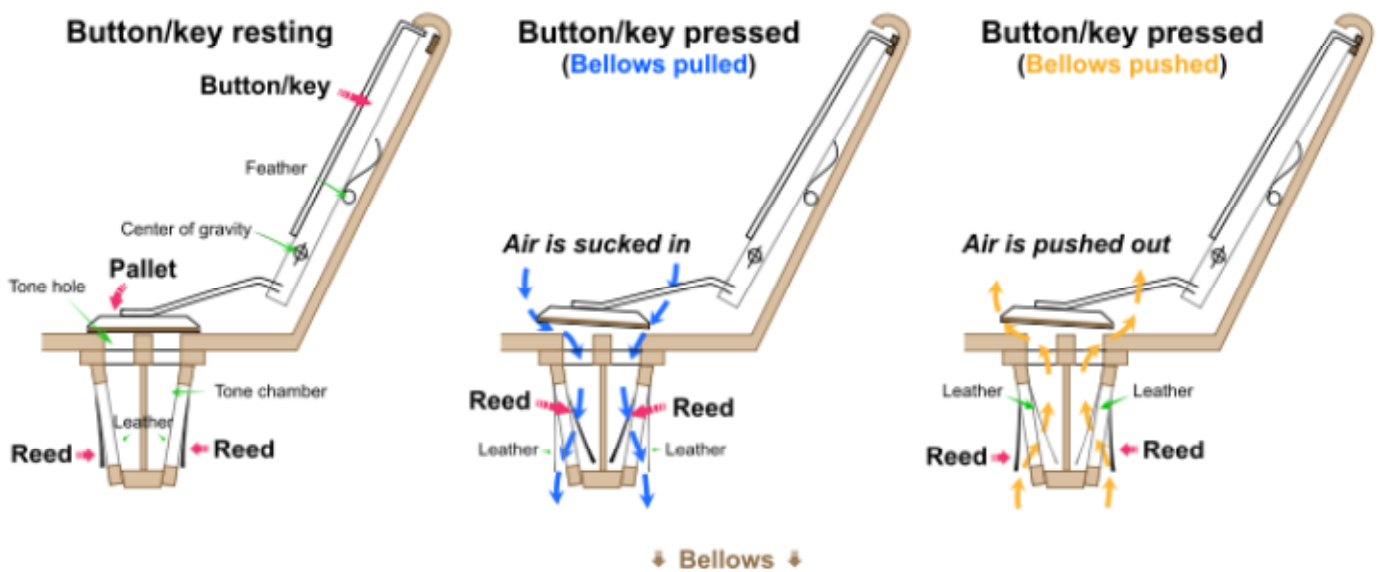
Chromatic button accordions · · · 11,12,14

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Bandoneon · · · 4

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A side view of the pallet mechanism in a piano accordion. As the key is pressed down the pallet is lifted, allowing for air to enter the tone chamber in either direction and excite the reeds; air flow direction depends on the direction of bellows movement. A similar mechanical pallet movement is used in button accordions, as well as for bass mechanisms such as the Stradella *bass machine* that translates a single button press into multiple pallet openings for the notes of a chord.

## Variable components

The term *accordion* covers a wide range of instruments, with varying components. All instruments have reed ranks of some format. Not all have switches. The most typical accordion is the piano accordion, which is used for many musical genres. Another type of accordion is the button accordion, which is used in several musical traditions, including Cajun, Conjunto and Tejano music, Swiss and Austro-German Alpine music, and Argentinian tango music.

## Right-hand manual systems

Different systems exist for the right-hand manual of an accordion, which is normally used for playing the melody. Some use a button layout arranged in one way or another, while others use a piano-style keyboard. Each system has different claimed benefits<sup>[8]</sup> by those who prefer it. They are also used to define one accordion or another as a different "type":

- Chromatic button accordions and the bayan, a Russian variant, use a buttonboard where notes are arranged chromatically. Two major systems exist, referred to as the B-system and the C-system (there are also regional variants).
- Diatonic button accordions use a buttonboard designed around the notes of diatonic scales in a small number of keys. The keys are often arranged in one row for each key available. Chromatic scales may be available by combining notes from different rows. The adjective "diatonic" is also commonly used to describe bisonic or bisonoric accordions—that is, instruments whose right-hand-manual (and in some instances even bass) keys each sound two different notes depending on the direction of the bellows (for instance, producing major triad sequences while closing the bellows and dominant seventh or 7-9 while opening). Such is the case, for



Piano accordionist & chromatic button accordionist at Tokyo Big Sight

instance, with the Argentinian bandoneon, the Austro-German steirische Harmonika, the Italian organetto, the Swiss Schwyzerörgeli and the Anglo concertina.

- Piano accordions use a musical keyboard similar to a piano, at right angles to the cabinet, the tops of the keys inward toward the bellows
- 6-plus-6 accordions use a buttonboard with three rows of buttons in a "uniform" or "whole-tone" arrangement. The chromatic scale consists of two rows. The third row is a repetition of the first row, so there is the same fingering in all twelve scales. These accordions are produced only in special editions e.g. the *logicordion* produced by Harmona.



A button key accordion A *Weltmeister* piano accordion made by the company VEB Klingenthaler Harmonikawerke in Italy. It was brought by Italian immigrants to Australia as a reminder of their homeland.

### Left-hand manual systems

Different systems are also in use for the left-hand manual, which is normally used for playing the accompaniment. These almost always use distinct bass buttons and often have buttons with concavities or studs to help the player navigate the layout despite not being able to see the buttons while playing. There are three general categories:

- The Stradella bass system, also called *standard bass*, is arranged in a circle of fifths and uses single buttons for chords.
- The Belgian bass system is a variation used in Belgian chromatic accordions. It is also arranged in a circle of fifths but in reverse order. This system has three rows of basses, three rows of chord buttons allowing easier fingering for playing melodies, combined chords, better use of fingers one and five, and more space between the buttons. This system was poorly traded outside of its native Belgium.
- Various free-bass systems for greater access to playing melodies on the left-hand manual and to forming one's own chords. These are often chosen for playing jazz and classical music. Some models can convert between free-bass and Stradella bass; this is called *converter bass*. The free-bass left hand notes are arranged chromatically in three rows with one additional duplicate row of buttons.



Typical 120-button Stradella bass system. This is the left-hand manual system found on most unisonoric accordions today.

### Reed ranks and switches

Inside the accordion are the reeds that generate the instrument tones. These are organized in different sounding *banks*, which can be further combined into *registers* producing differing *timbres*. All but the smaller accordions are equipped with switches that control which combination of reed banks operate, organized from high to low registers. Each register

stop produces a separate sound timbre, many of which also differ in octaves or in how different octaves are combined. See the [accordion reed ranks and switches](#) article for further explanation and audio samples. All but the smallest accordions usually have treble switches. The larger and more expensive accordions often also have bass switches to give options for the reed bank on the bass side.

### Classification of chromatic and piano type accordions

In describing or pricing an accordion, the first factor is size, expressed in number of keys on either side. For a piano type, this could for one example be 37/96, meaning 37 keys (three octaves plus one note) on the treble side and 96 bass keys. After size, the price and weight of an accordion is largely dependent on the number of reed ranks on either side, either on a [cassotto](#) or not, and to a lesser degree on the number of combinations available through register switches. Typically, these could be announced as *Reeds: 5 + 3*, meaning five reeds on the treble side and three on the bass, and *Registers: 13 + M, 7*, meaning 13 register buttons on the treble side plus a special "master" that activates all ranks, like the "tutti" on an organ, and seven register switches on the bass side.

### Straps

The larger piano and chromatic button accordions are usually heavier than other smaller [squeezeboxes](#), and are equipped with two shoulder straps to make it easier to balance the weight and increase bellows control while sitting, and avoid dropping the instrument while standing. Other accordions, such as the [diatonic button accordion](#), have only a single shoulder strap and a right hand thumb strap. All accordions have a (mostly adjustable) leather strap on the left-hand manual to keep the player's hand in position while drawing the bellows. There are also straps above and below the bellows to keep it securely closed when the instrument is not playing.

### Electronic and digital

In the 2010s, a range of electronic and digital accordions are made. They have an electronic [sound module](#) which creates the accordion sound, and most use [MIDI](#) systems to encode the keypresses and transmit them to the sound module. A digital accordion can have hundreds of sounds, which can include different types of accordions and even non-accordion sounds, such as pipe organ, piano, or guitar. Sensors are used on the buttons and keys, such as magnetic reed switches. Sensors are also used on the bellows to transmit the pushing and pulling of the bellows to the sound module. Digital accordions may have features not found in acoustic instruments, such as a piano-style [sustain pedal](#), a modulation control for changing keys, and a [portamento](#) effect.

As an electronic instrument, these types of accordions are plugged into a [PA system](#) or [keyboard amplifier](#) to produce sound. Some digital accordions have a small internal speaker and amplifier, so they can be used without a PA system or keyboard amplifier, at least for practicing and small venues like [coffeehouses](#). One benefit of electronic accordions is that they can be practiced with headphones, making them inaudible to other people nearby. On a digital accordion, the volume of the right-hand keyboard and the left-hand buttons can be independently adjusted.



Accordion reed ranks with closeup of reeds



Accordion player in a street in the historic centre of Quito, Ecuador

Acoustic-digital hybrid accordions also exist. They are acoustic accordions (with reeds, bellows, and so on), but they also contain sensors, electronics, and MIDI connections, which provides a wider range of sound options. An acoustic-digital hybrid may be manufactured in this form, or it may be an acoustic accordion which has had aftermarket electronics sensors and connections added. Several companies sell aftermarket electronics kits, but they are typically installed by professional accordion technicians, due to the complex and delicate nature of the internal parts of an accordion.

## Unusual accordions

Various hybrid accordions have been created between instruments of different buttonboards and actions. Many remain curiosities — only a few have remained in use:

- The Schrammel accordion, used in Viennese chamber music and klezmer, which has the treble buttonboard of a chromatic button accordion and a bisonoric bass buttonboard, similar to an expanded diatonic button accordion
- The Steirische Harmonika, a type of bisonoric diatonic button accordion particular to the Alpine folk music of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, the German state of Bavaria, and the Italian South Tyrol
- The schwyzerörgeli or Swiss organ, which usually has a three-row diatonic treble and 18 unisonoric bass buttons in a bass/chord arrangement — a subset of the Stradella system in reverse order like the Belgian bass — that travel parallel to the bellows motion
- The trikitixa of the Basque people, which has a two-row diatonic, bisonoric treble and a 12-button diatonic unisonoric bass
- The British chromatic accordion, the favoured diatonic accordion in Scotland. While the right hand is bisonoric, the left hand follows the Stradella system. The elite form of this instrument is generally considered the German manufactured Shand Morino, produced by Hohner with the input of Sir Jimmy Shand<sup>[9]</sup>
- Pedal harmony, a type of accordion used sometimes in Polish folk music, which has a pair of pump organ-like bellows attached

## History

The accordion's basic form is believed to have been invented in Berlin, in 1822, by Christian Friedrich Ludwig Buschmann,<sup>[notes 4][10]</sup> although one instrument has been recently discovered that appears to have been built earlier.<sup>[notes 5][11][12]</sup>

The earliest history of the accordion in Russia is poorly documented. Nevertheless, according to Russian researchers, the earliest known simple accordions were made in Tula, Russia, by Timofey Vorontsov from 1820, and Ivan Sizov from 1830.<sup>[13]</sup> By the late 1840s, the instrument was already very widespread;<sup>[14]</sup> together the factories of the two masters were producing 10,000 instruments a year. By 1866, over 50,000 instruments were being produced yearly by Tula and neighbouring villages, and by 1874 the yearly production rate was over 700,000.<sup>[15]</sup> By the 1860s,



Rainer von Vielen-Heimatsound playing a Roland digital V-Accordion. The bank of electronic switches can change the accordion's sound, tone and volume.



Garmon player



Eight-bisonoric diatonic accordion (c. 1830)

Novgorod, Vyatka and Saratov governorates also had significant accordion production. By the 1880s, the list included Oryol, Ryazan, Moscow, Tver, Vologda, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod and Simbirsk, and many of these places created their own varieties of the instrument.<sup>[16]</sup>

Fig. 2. Harmonika af samme type som Cyrill Demians tidligste modeller. O 1830 blev instrumentet givet til præsens Johannes Dillner af grevinde Brahe til Rydboholm i Sverige (privat ej). *Accordion, same type as Cyrill Demian's earliest models. Ca. 1830, the Swedish countess Brahe donated this instrument to the Rev. Johannes Dillner, promoter of the bowed zither "psalmodikon" in Sweden (private property). Photo: the Musikmuseet in Stockholm.*

Zitat Dillner Akkordeon

The accordion is one of several European inventions of the early 19th century that use free reeds driven by a bellows. An instrument called *accordion* was first patented in 1829 by Cyrill Demian, of Armenian origin, in Vienna.<sup>[notes 6]</sup> Demian's instrument bore little resemblance to modern instruments. It only had a left hand buttonboard, with the right hand simply operating the bellows. One key feature for which Demian sought the patent was the sounding of an entire chord by depressing one key. His instrument also could sound two different chords with the same key, one for each bellows direction (a *bisonoric* action). At that time in Vienna, mouth harmonicas with *Kanzellen* (chambers) had already been available for many years, along with bigger instruments driven by hand bellows. The diatonic key arrangement was also already in use on mouth-blown instruments. Demian's patent thus covered an accompanying instrument: an accordion played with the left hand, opposite to the way that contemporary chromatic hand harmonicas were played, small and light enough for travelers to take with them and used to accompany singing. The patent also described instruments with both bass and treble sections, although Demian preferred the bass-only instrument owing to its cost and weight advantages.<sup>[notes 7]</sup>

The accordion was introduced from Germany into Britain in about the year 1828.<sup>[17]</sup> The instrument was noted in *The Times* in 1831 as one new to British audiences<sup>[18]</sup> and was not favourably reviewed, but nevertheless it soon became popular.<sup>[19]</sup> It had also become popular with New Yorkers by the mid-1840s.<sup>[20]</sup>

After Demian's invention, other accordions appeared, some featuring only the right-handed keyboard for playing melodies. It took English inventor Charles Wheatstone to bring both chords and keyboard together in one squeezebox. His 1844 patent for what he called a *concertina* also featured the ability to easily tune the reeds from the outside with a simple tool.

The musician Adolph Müller described a great variety of instruments in his 1833 book *Schule für Accordion*. At the time, Vienna and London had a close musical relationship, with musicians often performing in both cities in the same year, so it is possible that Wheatstone was aware of this type of instrument and may have used them to put his key-arrangement ideas into practice.



The first pages in Adolph Müller's accordion book

Jeune's *flutina* resembles Wheatstone's concertina in internal construction and tone colour, but it appears to complement Demian's accordion functionally. The flutina is a one-sided bisonoric melody-only instrument whose keys are operated with the right hand while the bellows is operated with the left. When the two instruments are combined, the result is quite similar to diatonic button accordions still manufactured today.

Further innovations followed and continue to the present. Various buttonboard and keyboard systems have been developed, as well as voicings (the combination of multiple tones at different octaves), with mechanisms to switch between different voices during performance, and different methods of internal construction to improve tone, stability and durability.

## Use in various music genres



The accordion has traditionally been used to perform folk or ethnic music, popular music, and transcriptions from the operatic and light-classical music repertoire.<sup>[21]</sup> Today the instrument is sometimes heard in contemporary pop styles, such as rock and pop-rock,<sup>[22]</sup> and occasionally even in serious classical music concerts, as well as advertisements.

## Use in traditional music

The accordion's popularity spread rapidly: it has mostly been associated with the common people, and was propagated by Europeans who emigrated around the world. The accordion in both button and piano forms became a favorite of folk musicians<sup>[23]</sup> and has been integrated into traditional music styles all over the world: see the list of music styles that incorporate the accordion.

## Use in jazz

Jazz accordionists from the United States include Steve Bach, Milton DeLugg, Orlando DiGirolamo, Dominic Frontiere, Guy Klucevsek, Yuri Lemeshev, Frank Marocco, John Serry Sr., Lee Tomboulian, and Art Van Damme. French jazz accordionists include Richard Galliano, Bernard Lubat, and Vincent Peirani. Norwegian jazz accordionists include Asmund Bjørken, Stian Carstensen, Gabriel Fliflet, Frode Haltli, and Eivin One Pedersen.

## Use in popular music

The accordion appeared in popular music from the 1900s to the 1960s. This half-century is often called the "golden age of the accordion".<sup>[24]</sup> Five players, Pietro Frosini, the two brothers Count Guido Deiro and Pietro Deiro and Slovenian brothers Vilko Ovsenik and Slavko Avsenik, Charles Magnante were major influences at this time.<sup>[25]</sup>

Most vaudeville theaters closed during the Great Depression, but accordionists during the 1930s–1950s taught and performed for radio. Included among this group was the concert virtuoso John Serry, Sr.<sup>[26][27][28]</sup> During the 1950s through the 1980s the accordion received significant exposure on television with performances by Myron Floren on *The Lawrence Welk Show*.<sup>[29]</sup> In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the accordion declined in popularity due to the rise of rock and roll.<sup>[30]</sup> The first accordionist to appear and perform at the Newport Jazz Festival was Angelo DiPippo. He can be seen playing his accordion in the motion picture *The Godfather*. He also composed and performed with his accordion on part of the soundtrack of Woody Allen's movie *To Rome With Love*. He was featured twice on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson.

Richard Galliano is an internationally known jazz accordionist. Some popular acts use the instrument in their distinctive sounds. A notable example is Grammy Award-winning parodist "Weird Al" Yankovic, who plays the accordion on many of his musical tracks, particularly his polkas. Yankovic was trained in the accordion as a child.<sup>[31]</sup>

The accordion has also been used in the rock genre, most notably by John Linnell of They Might Be Giants, featuring more prominently in the band's earlier works.<sup>[32]</sup> The instrument is still frequently used during live performances, and continues to make appearances in their studio albums. Accordion is also used in the music of the Dropkick Murphys and Gogol Bordello.

Accordionists in heavy metal music make their most extensive appearances in the folk metal subgenre, and are otherwise generally rare. Full-time accordionists in folk metal seem even rarer, but they are still utilized for studio work, as flexible keyboardists are usually more accessible for live performances. The Finnish symphonic folk-metal band Turisas used to have a full-time accordionist, employing classical and polka sensibilities alongside a violinist. One of their accordionists,

Netta Skog, is now a member of Ensiferum, another folk-metal band. Another Finnish metal band, Korpiklaani, invokes a type of Finnish polka called humppa, and also has a full-time accordionist. Sarah Kiener, the former hurdy-gurdy player for the Swiss melodic-death-folk metal band Eluveitie, played a Helvetic accordion known as a *zugerörgeli*.

## Use in classical music

Although best known as a folk instrument, it has grown in popularity among classical composers. The earliest surviving concert piece is *Thème varié très brillant pour accordéon methode Reisner*, written in 1836 by Louise Reisner of Paris. Other composers, including the Russian Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, the Italian Umberto Giordano, and the American Charles Ives, wrote works for the diatonic button accordion.

The first composer to write specifically for the chromatic accordion was Paul Hindemith.<sup>[33]</sup> In 1922, the Austrian Alban Berg included an accordion in *Wozzeck*, Op. 7. In 1937 the first accordion concerto was composed in Russia. Other notable composers have written for the accordion during the first half of the 20th century.<sup>[34]</sup> Included among this group was the Italian-American John Serry Sr., whose *Concerto for Free Bass Accordion* was completed in 1964.<sup>[35][36]</sup> In addition, the american accordionist Robert Davine composed his *Divertimento for Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon and Accordion* as a work for chamber orchestra.<sup>[37]</sup> American composer William P. Perry featured the accordion in his orchestral suite *Six Title Themes in Search of a Movie* (2008). The experimental composer Howard Skempton began his musical career as an accordionist, and has written numerous solo works for it. In his work *Drang* (1999), British composer John Palmer (<http://www.johnpalmer.org>) pushed the expressive possibilities of the accordion/bayan. Luciano Berio wrote *Sequenza XIII* (1995) for accordionist Teodoro Anzellotti.<sup>[38]</sup> Accordionists like Mogens Ellegaard, Joseph Macerollo, Friedrich Lips, Hugo Noth, Stefan Hussong, Italo Salizzato, Teodoro Anzellotti, Mie Miki, and Geir Draugsvoll, encouraged composers to write new music for the accordion (solo and chamber music) and also started playing baroque music on the free bass accordion.

French composer Henri Dutilleux used an accordion in both his late song cycles *Correspondances* (2003) and *Le Temps l'Horloge* (2009). Russian-born composer Sofia Gubaidulina has composed solos, concertos, and chamber works for accordion. Astor Piazzolla's concert tangos are performed widely. Piazzolla performed on the bandoneon, but his works are performed on either bandoneon or accordion.

## Australia

The earliest mention of the novel accordion instrument in Australian music occurs in the 1830s.<sup>[39]</sup> The accordion initially competed against cheaper and more convenient reed instruments such as mouth organ, concertina and melodeon. Frank Fracchia was an Australian accordion composer<sup>[40]</sup> and copies of his works "My dear, can you come out tonight"<sup>[41]</sup> and "Dancing with you"<sup>[42]</sup> are preserved in Australian libraries. Other Australian composers who arranged music for accordion include Reginald Stoneham.<sup>[43]</sup> The popularity<sup>[44]</sup> of the accordion peaked in the late 1930s<sup>[44]</sup> and continued until the 1950s.<sup>[45]</sup> The accordion was particularly favoured by buskers.<sup>[46][47]</sup>

## Bosnia and Herzegovina



A folk accordionist 2009

The accordion is a traditional instrument in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is the dominant instrument used in sevdalinka, a traditional genre of folk music from Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is also considered a national instrument of the country.

## Brazil

The accordion was brought to Brazil by settlers and immigrants from Europe, especially from Italy and Germany, who mainly settled in the south (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Parana). The first instrument brought was a "Concertina" (a 120 button chromatic accordion).<sup>[48]</sup> The instrument was popular in the 1950s, and was common to find several accordions in the same house. There are many different configurations and tunes which were adapted from the cultures that came from Europe.

Accordion is the official symbol instrument of the Rio Grande do Sul state, where was voted by unanimity in the deputy chamber.<sup>[49]</sup> During the boom of accordions there were around 65 factories in Brazil, where most of them (52) in the south, in Rio Grande do Sul state, with only 7 outside the south. One of the most famous and genuinely Brazilian brands was Acordeões Todeschini from Bento Gonçalves-RS, closed in 1973. The Todeschini accordion is very appreciated today and survives with very few maintainers.<sup>[50][51]</sup> The most notable musicians of button accordions are Renato Borghetti, Adelar Bertussi, Albino Manique and Edson Dutra.<sup>[52]</sup>

Compared to many other countries, the instrument is very popular in mainstream pop music. In some parts of the country, such as the northeast it is the most popular melodic instrument. As opposed to most European folk accordions, a very dry tuning is usually used in Brazil. Outside the south, the accordion (predominantly the piano accordion) is used in almost all styles of Forró (in particular in the subgenres of Xote and Baião) as the principal instrument, Luiz Gonzaga (the "King of the Baião") and Dominginhos being among the notable musicians in this style from the northeast. In this musical style the typical combination is a trio of accordion, triangle and zabumba (a type of drum). This style has gained popularity recently, in particular among the student population of the southeast of the country (in the Forró Universitário genre, with important exponents today being Falamansa, and trios such as Trio Dona Zefa, Trio Virgulino and Trio Alvorada). Moreover, the accordion is the principal instrument in Junina music (music of the São João Festival), with Mario Zan having been a very important exponent of this music. It is an important instrument in Sertanejo (and Caipira) music, which originated in the midwest and southeast of Brazil, and subsequently has gained popularity throughout the country.



Brazilian accordionist Dominginhos (José Domingos de Morais (1941 – 2013))

## Colombia

The accordion is also a traditional instrument in Colombia, commonly associated with the vallenato and cumbia genres. The accordion has been used by tropipop musicians such as Carlos Vives, Andrés Cabas, Fonseca (singer) and Bacilos, as well as rock musicians such as Juanes and pop musicians as Shakira. Vallenato, who emerged in the early twentieth century in a city known as Valledupar, and have come to symbolize the folk music of Colombia.

Every year in April, Colombia holds one of the most important musical festivals in the country: the Vallenato Legend Festival. The festival holds contests for best accordion player. Once every decade, the "King of Kings" accordion competition takes place, where winners of the previous festivals compete for the highest possible award for a vallenato accordion player: the *Pilonera Mayor* prize.<sup>[53]</sup> This is the world's largest competitive accordion festival.

## Mexico

Norteño heavily relies on the accordion, it is a genre related to polka. Ramón Ayala known in Mexico as the "King of the Accordion" is a norteño musician. Cumbia which features the accordion is also popular with musicians such as Celso Piña creating a more contemporary style. U.S. born Mexican musician Julieta Venegas incorporates the sound of the instrument into rock, pop and folk. She was influenced by her fellow Chicanos Los Lobos who also use the music of the accordion.<sup>[54]</sup>



A Norteño band, including an accordion

## North Korea

According to Barbara Demick in *Nothing to Envy*, the accordion is known as "the people's instrument" and all North Korean teachers were expected to learn the accordion.<sup>[55]</sup>

## Manufacturing process

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The most expensive accordions are always fully hand-made, particularly the reeds; completely hand-made reeds have a far better tonal quality than even the best automatically-manufactured ones. Some accordions have been modified by individuals striving to bring a more pure sound out of low-end instruments, such as the ones improved by Yutaka Usui,<sup>[56]</sup> a Japanese-born craftsman.

The manufacture of an accordion is only a partly automated process. In a sense, all accordions are handmade, since there is always some hand assembly of the small parts required. The general process involves making the individual parts, assembling the subsections, assembling the entire instrument, and final decorating and packaging.<sup>[57]</sup>

Famous centres of production are the Italian cities of Stradella and Castelfidardo, with many small and medium size manufacturers especially at the latter. Castelfidardo honours the memory of Paolo Soprani who was one of the first large-scale producers. The French town of Tulle has hosted Maugein Freres since 1919, and the company is now the last complete-process manufacturer of accordions in France. German companies such as Hohner and Weltmeister made large numbers of accordions, but production diminished by the end of the 20th century. Hohner still manufactures its top-end models in Germany, and *Weltmeister* instruments are still handmade by HARMONA Akkordeon GmbH in Klingenthal. Cheaper student models are often made in China.

## Other audio samples

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## See also

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- List of accordionists
- Steirische Harmonika

## Notes

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1. For the accordion's place among the families of musical instruments, see Henry Doktorski's *Taxonomy of Musical Instruments (The Classical Free-Reed, Inc.)* (<http://www.ksanti.net/free-reed/description/taxonomy.html>) Also on this page is Diarmuid Pigott's *The Free-Reed Family of Aerophones*

2. Guido Deiro claimed he was the first accordionist to play a solo with the left hand: *Sharpshooter's March* (1908) Guido Deiro, *Guido Deiro's Own Story of Sharpshooters March, The Pietro Musicordion*, Volume 6, Number 2 (May –June 1948)
3. Illustration made with reference from a similar illustration that can be found in both *Det levende bælgspil* (p. 9) by Jeanette & Lars Dyremose (2003), and *Harmonikaens historie* (p. 35a) by Bjarne Glenstrup (1972, The University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Music)
4. There is not a single document to back up this belief, Christian Friedrich Ludwig Buschmann was 16 years old at that time and we do have some handwriting of C.F. Buschschrann and his Father, but without any related notice within. First time of mentioned a aeoline was in a writing dated 1829.
5. This is the accordion owned by Fredrik Dillner of Sweden, which has the name F. Löhner Nürnberg engraved (stamped) on it. The instrument was given to Johannes Dillner in 1830 or earlier
6. A summary and pictures of this patent can be found at [www.ksanti.net/free-reed/history/demian.html](http://www.ksanti.net/free-reed/history/demian.html) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090619162610/http://www.ksanti.net/free-reed/history/demian.html>) (Version of 20 Okt 4 – 19 Jun 09 Using Way Back Machine to Display: The Classical Free-Reed, Inc.)
7. German Text: "Mit den Dekel des Balges, läßt sich das ganze Instrument verdoppeln, so daß man dadurch die Accorde vermehrt, oder auch mit einzelne Töne spielen kann, in diesem Fall, muß ein zweyter Einsatz mit Federn, und auch eine 2te Claviatur dazu kommen, der Blasebalg bleibt in der Mitte, jede Hand dirigirt abwechselnd, entweder die Claves, oder den Balg. Durch eine obengenannte Verdopplung des Instruments oder durch Vermehrung der Accorde, würde niemand etwas verbessern, oder was neues liefern, weil nur die Bestandtheile dadurch vermehrt, das Instrument theurer und schwerer wird." Translation of this snip: With the Cover of the bellows the instrument can be duplicated, so the amount of Chords or single notes can be enlarged, or one can sound single notes, in this case, a second part with springs (free reeds) and also a second keyboard must be added, the bellows are in between these two parts, both hands push buttons and push and pull the bellows at the same time or alternatively. Through this doubling or increasing of chords within the instrument nothing new is invented or improved by someone else, because only the amount of similar parts is increased and the Instrument is heavier and more expensive. German full text (<http://www.akkordeon-online.de/instrum/demian.htm>)

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2. "TOP FIVE – OS MAIORES SANFONEIROS DA MÚSICA SERTANEJA ATUAL - Blognejo" (<http://blognejo.com.br/blognejo-informa/top-five-os-maiores-sanfoneiros-da-musica-sertaneja-atual>).
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