

ACCORDION TECHNIQUE NOTEBOOK

- ELEMENTARY LEVEL -



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(English translation by Itxaso Berasategi)

ACCORDION TECHNIQUE NOTEBOOK:
ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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CHAPTER I: THE POSITION, THE INSTRUMENT AND OUR BODY

The teacher will explain the description of the most suitable posture to play the accordion, as indicated below:

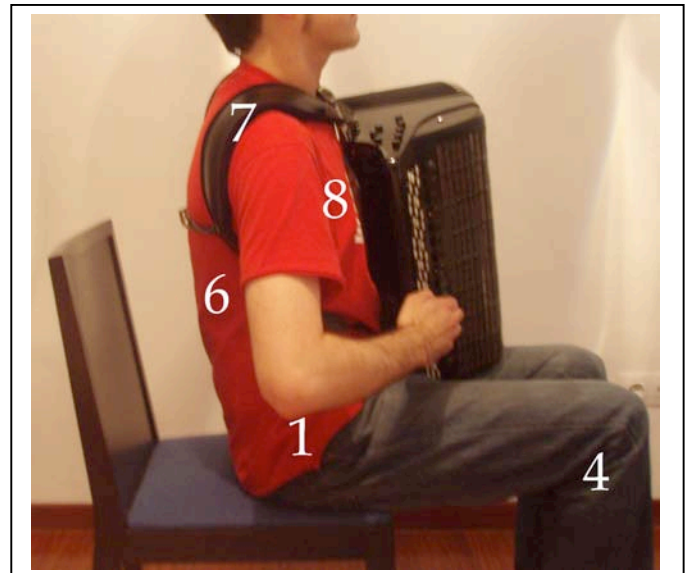
How to sit:

1. Sit on the front of the **chair**.
2. The height of the chair should be such that the legs are parallel to the ground. In case the chair is too low, the accordion will fall on the instrument player. In case the chair is too high, it will pull the instrument player forward.
3. The soles of the **feet** should be rested completely on the ground.
4. **Legs** bent at a 90-degree angle.
5. **Legs** should be separated by 5 or 10 cm, so that the bellows are not resting on the left leg, avoiding that way the frictional force on the leg.
6. The **back** should be straight but without stiffness (allowing the flexibility of the lumbar region).
7. **Shoulders** should be relaxed.



How to place the instrument:

8. Bellows resting in the **chest**.
9. Rest the lower corner of the right keyboard on the inside of the thigh, near the **groin**, in order to hold the accordion when closing the bellows.



How to adjust the straps:

10. Straps must be properly **adjusted** to the size of the instrument player. One of the reasons for that is that the student is frequently growing up constantly and will need to adjust again the straps in a future.
11. The **right strap** should be adjusted a little looser than the left one.
12. It is recommended to have a **third strap** to join the two basic straps at about the mid part of the spine, to make it always be straight.
13. **Bellows strap:** it must be tight enough for the bellows to respond to any movement of the left arm, allowing at the same time the forearm and the wrist to move with agility when posture changes.



How to place hands on the keyboard:

14. The **left arm** should be relaxed, avoiding lifting the elbow when expanding and contracting the bellows.
15. The **right arm** should be parallel to the keyboard (straight line from the central phalanx of each finger to the elbow).
16. Fingers should be bent at the height of the central phalanx, playing with the point at which the fingernail and fingertips are joined.



EXERCISE no. 1

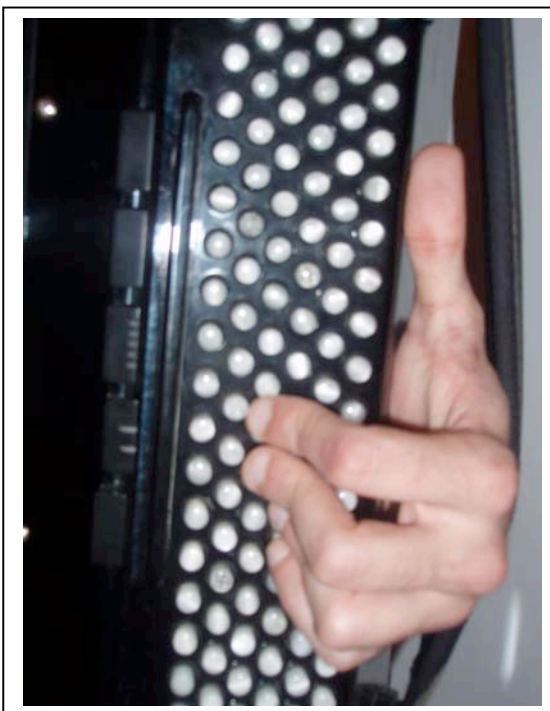
Describe why the postures in the following photos are incorrect:

EXERCISE no. 2

Look for a photo of an accordionist playing on the internet, bring it to the collective class and we'll all discuss the position.

EXERCISE no. 3

We will do this exercise every day in the daily study at home and in the classes of the course: we must check our posture all the time.



CHAPTER II: BELLOWS TECHNIQUE

A proper bellow technique is based on a proper movement of the bellows opening and closing the bellows with symmetry (always fan-shaped).

The support points for this movement will be as follows:

- When opening the bellows, we will put the force on the strap located on the left keyboard with the outside of the wrist.
- When closing the bellows, we will apply the force to the left keyboard holder with the inside of the forearm.
- Sound compression: it is a technique to make the air that feeds the reeds more compressed and get more control over the pressure of it, pulling and holding at the same time, so if when opening the bellows we want to get a strength of 2 units of strength, we will pull with a strength of 4 units and hold with 2 units of strength. The result will also be 2, but with a more controlled sound and with greater pressure and precision.

Chapter II: Section I DYNAMICS

In the accordion the performance of the dynamics depends on how hard we push and pull to the bellows: if we push or pull very hard the bellows, the sound will be loud and if we hardly apply strength, the sound will be soft. The dynamic possibilities of the accordion are enormous: in the case of a single note, heard at a meter distance, the variation without height modification could be from 50 dB to 90 dB.

EXERCISE no. 1:

The teacher will lead us in the collective class, indicating different dynamics with his arms (crescendos, diminuendos, contrasts, etc.), for us to make them.

Chapter II: Section II BELLOWS CHANGES

One of the great difficulties of the accordion technique is the moment to change the direction of the bellows, because it is the moment when the reeds involved when opening or closing the bellows change the roles, resulting in a cut in the sound.

In order to avoid that inevitable cut to be significant, we must choose a musically appropriate moment (a rest or a breath).

The most usual notations to indicate the bellows changes are the following: ■ V (open and close) or 7 7.

The two most appropriate ways to make the change are the next ones:

- Making the change of movement as quickly as possible paying attention that the left keyboard moves as little as possible when doing so.

- Making the change in slightly circular way and in two steps: When making the change to close, before starting to close the bellows move the elbow slightly in and after making the change. When making the change to open, move the elbow slightly out and after making the change. in this way we will be able to slightly soften the negative effect of the change. That way we'll be able to soften slightly the negative effect of the change.

Some accordion schools psychophysiolgize the movement of the change of the bellows direction with some actions such as breathing at the same time as changing.

It is highly recommended to mark the bellows changes that you are going to make in the score you need to study. It can be notated with the following symbols: ■ to start to open and V to start to close.

In the next class the teacher will correct them in case there is any that is not the most appropriate one. In the following class we will check they really work. Once we've fixed them we will always make the changes in the same place, although if we see that some particular one does not work, we can and must change it in the score to perform it in the right place from that moment on.

Whenever you are mistaken (playing notes, stopping, forgetting about some change of bellows, etc.) try to reach the next opening with the bellows as closed as possible, in order to continue with the bellows changes you have marked.

Chapter II: Section III **BELLOWS EFFECTS**

The bellows allow for making many different characteristic effects of the accordion, mainly used in the contemporary music. The first work for accordion which investigated the musical possibilities of these effects was "Anatomic Safari" by Per Norgard, written in 1967 in collaboration with the great Danish soloist Mogens Ellegaard.

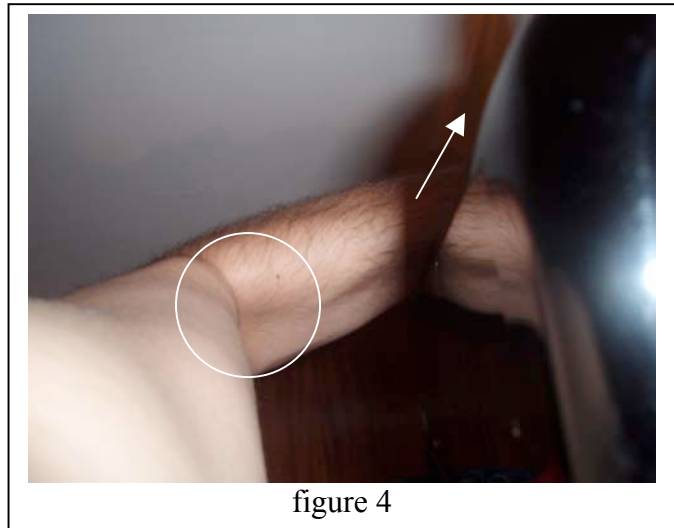
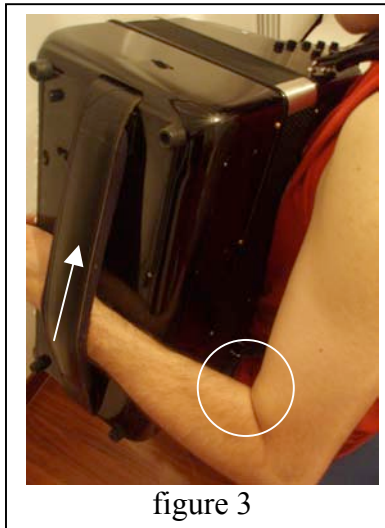
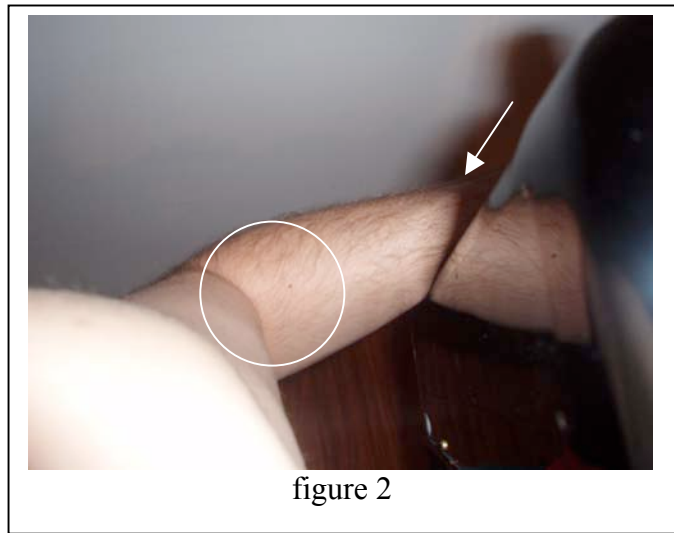
Chapter II: Section III.1

Bellows Shake

The teacher will explain to you how to perform the Bellow Shake: It consists on opening and closing the bellows alternatively, giving as a result the effect of note's repetition, similar to the tremolo in string instruments.

Its performance involves two movements that must be done quickly and nervously: opening the bellows pushing the forearm down, without moving the elbow, as indicated in figures 1 and 2, and move it up as indicated in figures 3 and 4. We just need to relax and tighten the muscle indicated within the circle in the following figures. The less we move the arm the less effort we'll have to make.

Make the exercises no.2 to 7 to make it faster and faster, and the exercises no. 8 and 9 to learn how to perform different rhythms with the Bellows Shake.



Chapter II: Section III.2
Bellows Shake exercises

no.2

$\text{♩} = 60$

no.3

$\text{♩} = 60$

no.4

$\text{♩} = 60$

no.5

$\text{♩} = 80$

no.6

$\text{♩} = 100$

no.7

$\text{♩} = 120$

no.8

$\text{♩} = 120$

no.9

$\text{♩} = 150$

In the table below, you should write down the result of your daily work with the Bellow Shake, guided by your "friend" the metronome and a stopwatch.

In the left column you should write down the day you study. You need to start every day with the exercise no. 2 and don't start next exercise till you stay the indicated time making each exercise. When you pass an exercise put an X in the corresponding box. When you don't pass an exercise write down the time you have stayed and don't start doing the next exercise. Try each day to improve the previous day's work.

In case the bellows get opening progressively, that means that you are opening more strongly than when you close and therefore, you are not making well the movement.

If your Bellow Shake is not regular or you're not doing well with the metronome, start over the exercise to try to make it correctly: COME ON!!

[illegible]

Chapter II: Section III.3

Ricochet in 3

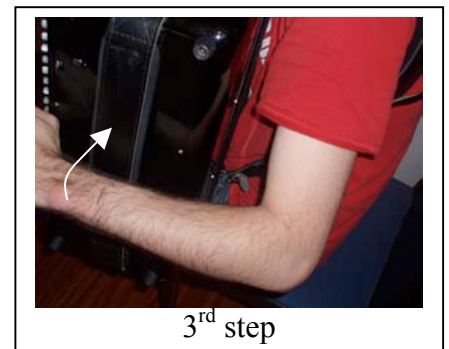
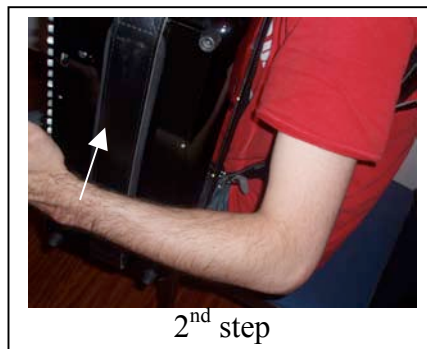
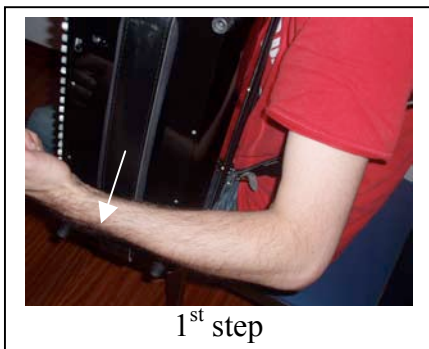
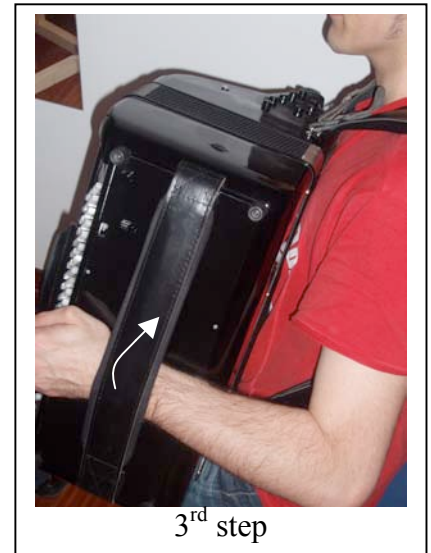
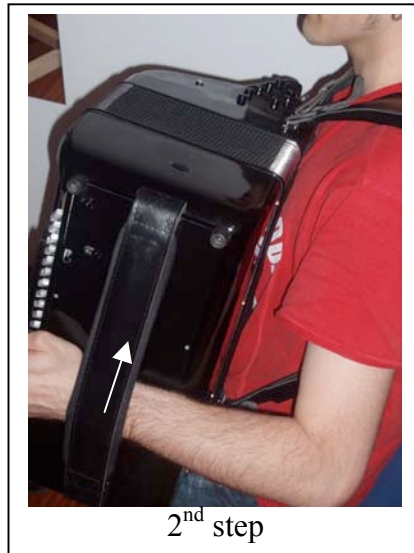
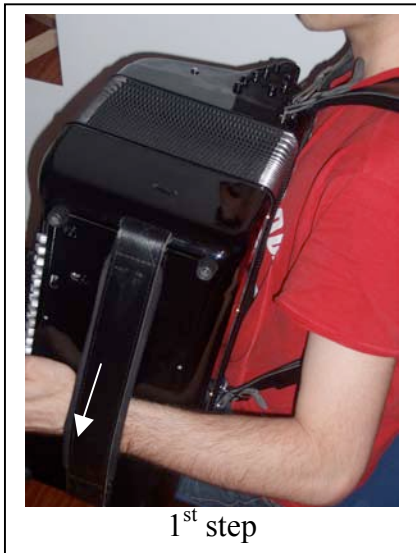
The Ricochet in 3 is a very virtuous movement that could be described as a ternary tremolo.

It involves rotating the wrist as indicated in the figure, by the following three steps, with a triplets' rhythm:

1st step: Open the bellows.

2nd step: Close the bellows by slightly lifting the lower part.

3rd step: Hit the bellows against the right keyboard box.



In the table below, you should write down the result of your daily work with the Ricochet a 3, the same way you did with the Bellow Shake, guided again by your "friend" the metronome and a stopwatch.

The same way you did with the Bellow Shake, in the left column you should write down the day you study. You need to start every day with the exercise no. 10 and don't start next exercise till you stay the indicated time making each exercise. When you pass an exercise put an X in the corresponding box. When you don't pass an exercise write down the time you have stayed and don't start doing the next exercise. Try each day to improve the previous day's work.

If your Ricochet is not regular or you're not doing well with the metronome, start over the exercise to try to make it correctly: COME ON!!

Year/month/day	no.10 30 sec.	no.11 30 sec.	no.12 30 sec.	no.13 1 min.
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Chapter II: Section III.4

Ricochet in 3

no.10

♩ = 60

no.11

♩ = 80

no.12

♩ = 100

no.13

♩ = 120

Chapter II: Section III.5

Bending

no.14

8

no.15

8

Chapter II: Section III.6

Vibrato

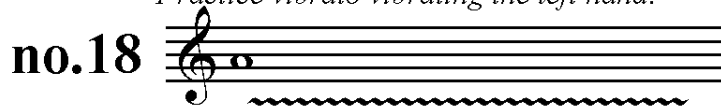
Practice vibrato vibrating the right hand:



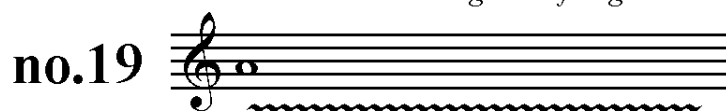
Practice vibrato vibrating the right leg:



Practice vibrato vibrating the left hand:



Practice vibrato vibrating the left leg:



Play the note with the left hand and hit continuously the top corner of the right keyboard:

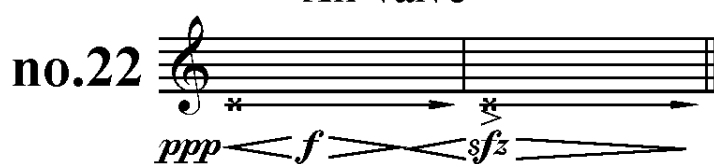


Play the note with the left hand, hold the top corner of the right keyboard and vibrate the right hand:



Chapter II: Section III.7

Air valve



CHAPTER III KEYBOARD TECHNIQUE

Section 1: SCALES

Chapter III: Section I.1 Types of musical Scales

CHROMATIC SCALE: *Play next scale first separately and after with both hands together respecting the indicated fingering and pulse.*

no.1

1 2 3 1 2 3 simile 3 3 3 3 3 3

- Play the scales no. 2 to no. 12 separately, maintaining a constant pulse and using the fingering you want, on the sole condition that you can't play two consecutive notes with the same finger:

C MAJOR SCALE:

no.2

A NATURAL MINOR SCALE:

no.3

A HARMONIC MINOR SCALE:

no.4

A MELODIC MINOR SCALE:

no.5

D DORIAN SCALE:



E PHRYGIAN SCALE:



F LYDIAN SCALE:



G MIXOLYDIAN SCALE:



B LOCRIAN SCALE:



C PENTATONIC SCALE:



C WHOLE TONE SCALE:



Chapter III: Section I.2

Major Scales

- Practice the following scale, using just 3 rows and with the digitation we suggest, maintaining a constant pulse, first with separate hands and after with both hands together:

no.13

C Major

- All the major scales which note starts in the 1st row can be practiced with the same suggested digitation. Practice the following scales with this digitation, maintaining a constant pulse, first with separate hands and after with both hands together:

no.14

Eb Major

no.15

F# Major

no.16

A Major

- Practice the following scale, using just 3 rows and with the digitation we suggest, maintaining a constant pulse, first with separate hands and after with both hands together:

no.17

G Major

- All the major scales which note starts in the 2nd row can be practiced with the same suggested digitation. Practice the following scales with this digitation, maintaining a constant pulse, first with separate hands and after with both hands together:

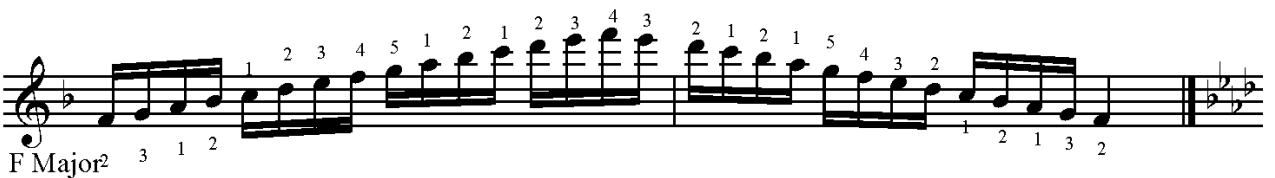
no.18

Bb Major

no.19 
Db Major

no.20 
E Major

- Practice the following scale, using just 3 rows and with the digitation we suggest, maintaining a constant pulse, first with separate hands and after with both hands together:

no.21 
F Major²

- All the major scales which note starts in the 3rd row can be practiced with the same suggested digitation. Practice the following scales with this digitation, maintaining a constant pulse, first with separate hands and after with both hands together:

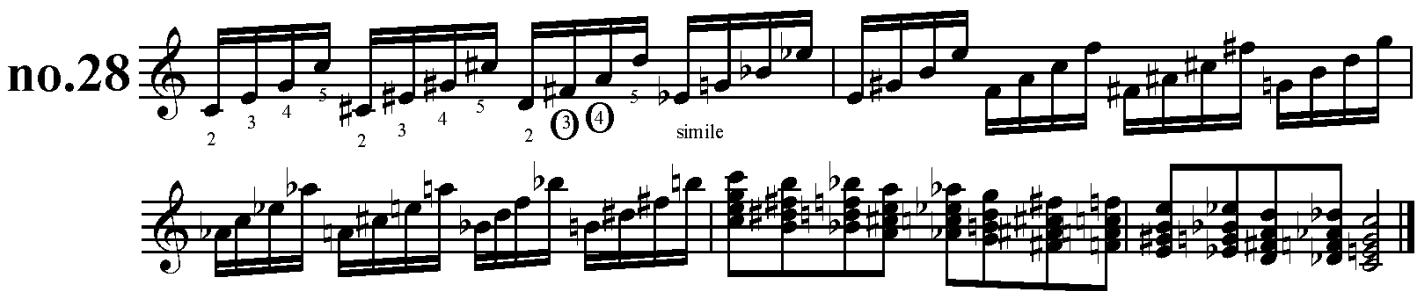
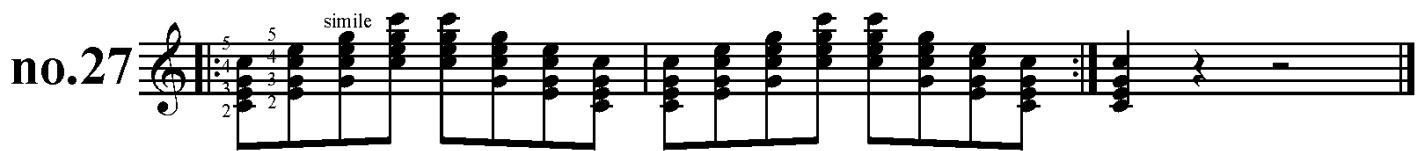
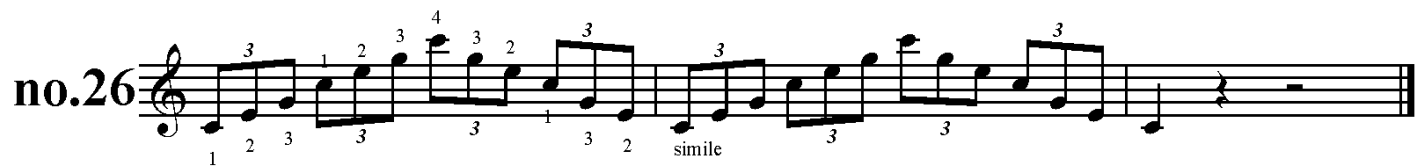
no.22 
Ab Major

no.23 
B Major

no.24 
D Major

Chapter III: Section II
ARPEGGIOS AND CHORDS

Majors:



Minors:



no.32



Exercise no. 32 consists of two staves of music. The first staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, featuring a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, naturals, and flats). The second staff is a bass line in bass clef, primarily composed of chords and some moving lines, providing harmonic support for the melody above.

Minor Seventh Chords (m7)


They are the arpeggio chords that result when adding majors and minors

no.33



Exercise no. 33 is a single melodic line in treble clef. It begins with a repeat sign. The first measure contains a sequence of notes with fingerings 2, 3, 4, 5. The word "simile" is written below the staff. The exercise concludes with a final note and a whole rest.

no.34



Exercise no. 34 is a single melodic line in treble clef. It starts with a sequence of notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2. The word "simile" is written below the staff. The exercise ends with a final note and a whole rest.

no.35



Exercise no. 35 is a single melodic line in treble clef. It begins with a sequence of notes with fingerings 5, 4, 3, 2, 5, 4, 3, 2. The word "simile" is written below the staff. The exercise concludes with a final note and a whole rest.

no.36



Exercise no. 36 consists of two staves of music. The first staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, featuring a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Fingerings 2, 3, 4, 5, 2, 3, 4, 5, 2, 3 are indicated. The word "simile" is written below the staff. The second staff is a bass line in bass clef, primarily composed of chords and some moving lines, providing harmonic support for the melody above.

Chapter III: Section III

BAROQUE ORNAMENTATION

Here there is the way the main symbols of the Baroque Ornamentation are notated. In this chapter you won't have to play them. Your teacher will be the one that plays them, for you to know they exist, hear how they sound and know how to perform them in case they appear in some of the works you are studying.



(Picture from "Little clavier book" for Wilhelm Friedmann Bach, taken from the edition of the Real Musical of the Well-Tempered Clavier by J.S. Bach)



Johann Sebastian Bach



Antonio Vivaldi

Chapter III: Section IV
POLYRHYTHM

no.37

Exercise no.37 is a two-staff piece in common time (C). The right staff features a sequence of eighth-note triplets, while the left staff plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a whole rest in the right hand and a whole note in the left hand.

no.38

Exercise no.38 is a two-staff piece in common time (C). The right staff plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the left staff features a sequence of eighth-note triplets. The piece concludes with a whole rest in the right hand and a whole note in the left hand.

no.39

Exercise no.39 is a two-staff piece in common time (C). Both the right and left staves feature a sequence of eighth-note triplets. The piece concludes with a whole rest in the right hand and a whole note in the left hand.

no.40

Exercise no.40 is a two-staff piece in common time (C). The right staff plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment, while the left staff features a sequence of eighth-note triplets. The piece concludes with a whole rest in the right hand and a whole note in the left hand.

Chapter 3: Section V
TEXTURES

Polyphony for two voices

Bach: Invention no. 1 BWV 772

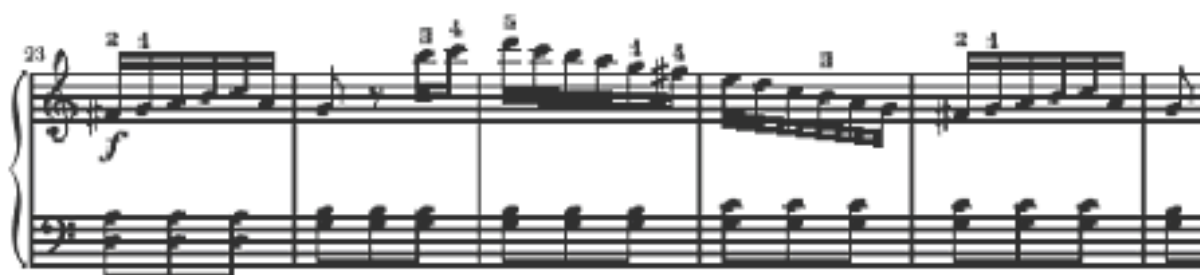
no.41



Accompanied melody

Clementi: Sonatina Op. 36 no.1: 3rd mov

no.42



Mozart: Sonata KV 545: 1st mov

no.43



Brahms: Waltz no. 15, Op. 39

no.44



Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition. Promenade

no.45



Traditional: Scotland the brave

no.46



Traditional: Danny boy

no.47



Chapter III: Section VI **DIGITATION**

Chapter III: Section VI.1 **Fingering Principles**

The teacher will explain to you some tips, such as the ones we give to you below on fingering some passages of many of the works you study:

- 1- Apply learned patterns when you can: use the fingerings that we have used in the scales, arpeggios, etc. of the previous exercises.
- 2- Use when you can the following sequence or part of it: 1-2-3-4-5 ó 5-4-3-2-1.
- 3- Choose, if possible, a fingering which allows you to have the fingers ready in the next notes you'll have to play.
- 4- After fingering the passage, play it quickly in order to check that the fingering is appropriate.
- 5- Use the right thumb in 1st and 2nd row, if possible, and never in a row that is higher than the one of the 2nd finger.
- 6- It is not recommended to use the left thumb in 2nd or 3rd row, although it is possible.
- 7- Use symmetrical sequences on both hands when possible.
- 8- Try to avoid as far as possible the 4th and the 5th rows: they are complementary lines.
- 9- When you must repeat a note in a quick passage change your finger.



- 10- Use the following combination in double notes: 1-5 and 2-4 or 1-4 and 2-3.



Chapter 3: Section VI.2

Different Fingerings

- Try the following different fingerings with C Major scale and explain which you think is the most appropriate and why.

no.48

Exercise no. 48 presents seven different fingering patterns for the C Major scale (C4 to C5). Each staff shows a different fingering pattern with numbers 1-5 and circled numbers 2, 3, 4.

- Staff 1: 1 2 3 4 5 1 3 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 3 1 5 4 3 2 1 3 5 4 3 2 1
- Staff 2: 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 2 1 5 4 3 2 1 5 4 3 2 1
- Staff 3: 2 3 4 3 4 2 3 2 3 4 3 4 2 3 2 3 4 3 2 3 2 3 4 3 2 1
- Staff 4: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 4 3 2 1
- Staff 5: 2 3 4 5 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3 4 3 2 4 3 2 3 5 4 3 2
- Staff 6: 2 3 2 3 4 2 3 2 3 4 2 3 2 3 2 3 4 2 3 2 3 2 4 3 2 3 2
- Staff 7: 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 3 4 2 1 4 2 3 4 2 1

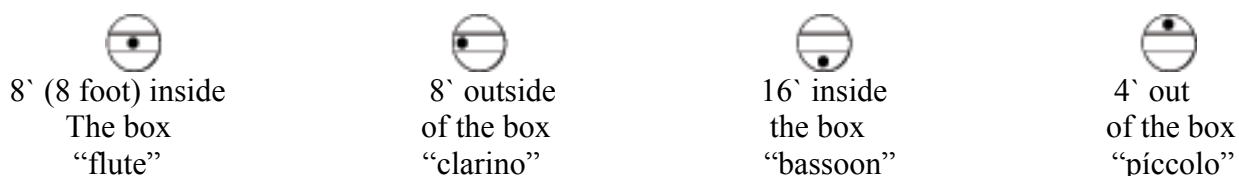
no.49 - Apply fingerings to the exercises 2 to 12 in this chapter.

Chapter III: Section VII REGISTERS

The registers of the accordion, in a similar way to the organ's ones, are used to change the timbre of the sound of the accordion.

Accordion reeds are divided in voices. Each voice consists of a complete and independent set of reeds, each with a different timbre and octave. Voices can be combined thanks to a system of registers, which selects which voices are activated.

The number of voices and the characteristics of the timbres change quite a lot depending on the accordion. The right keyboard of the concert accordions has usually the following voices:



The "box" is a soundboard called cassotto, which creates a warm and smooth sound. Children's accordions don't usually have cassotto.

The register "bassoon" lowers the sound one octave, and therefore usually we play one 8ve higher than what is written, and the register "piccolo" rises an octave the note.

Combining these voices are created the rest of the registers:



These registers are played in the real 8ve and the following ones lower the note one 8ve and are played an octave sharper:



In the left keyboard accordions usually have 2 voices in MIII:



In MII usually have 4 voices (2', 4', 8' and 16') that can be single, combined with each other or all together ("master" or "tutti" register) as indicated next:



The teacher will explain different applications of these registers during the class, so that you can see the differences between them, although you can experiment yourself!

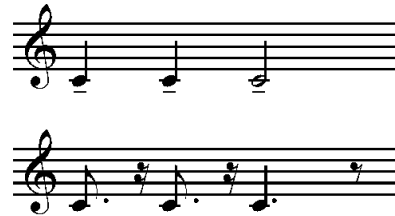
CHAPTER IV: ARTICULATIONS

CHAPTER IV: Section I EXPOSITION OF THE MAIN ARTICULATIONS

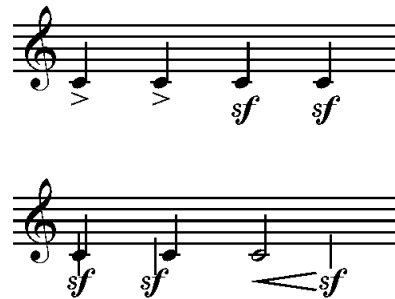
Staccato is performed on the accordion by quickly releasing the key. It can be performed with the fingers, from the wrist or from the elbow. Staccato affects the duration of the note, shortening it by half approximately.



Portato can be performed in different ways: Caressing the key horizontally, stopping the bellows, or combining both ways. Portato affects the duration of the note, shortening it by a quarter, approximately, as indicated next:



Accent is indicated with > when it must be done with the keyboard (playing the note with the finger, from the wrist or from the elbow), or with sf, which means we must perform it giving the bellows a pull. Nevertheless, usually these both notations are ambiguous in the scores so the way to perform it depends on the preferences of the interpreter and it can be done combining both keyboard and bellows. Bellows' accents can be performed giving the bellows a pull before playing the note, at the same time or even after pressing the key. Depending on it, the character changes much, but it is up to the interpreter as it is not indicated in the scores. Here you have it so that you can see it more easily:



Legato is played leaving no gap between the notes on the keyboard and maintaining the bellows without cuts in order to help the phrasing. There are many different legatos, from legato leggiero to legatissimo:



The articulations can be combined, as we'll see in the next exercises.

Chapter IV: Section II
ARTICULATIONS EXERCISES

Perform the following exercise playing staccato with finger (F), wrist (W) or elbow (E) as indicated:

no.1

Perform the following exercise differentiating the different attacks well:

no.2

Perform the following exercise playing portato with finger (F), bellows (B) or both (B'):

no.3

Perform the exercise of accents we suggest, playing the bellows' accent where indicated:

no.4

Perform the exercise playing *leggiero* and *legatissimo* differently and breathing where appropriate.

no.5

Perform the following exercise combining both kinds of articulations:

no.6

- no.7 Bring to class at least two recordings of a piece of music (look for it in the Conservatory's music library or on the internet) and we will compare in class the different articulations that interpreters use in these versions and in the ones that the teacher brings to class.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETIVE TECHNIQUE FOR ACCORDION SOLO

The teacher will give you the chance to listen to compositions included in the schedule of your course, either in CD or interpreted by himself, the most part of the compositions. You will have to choose an original composition for MIII, another for MII y and a transcription. The teacher will let you have a look to the scores and will make comments about the composers and the compositions.

We recommend that you buy the original scores of, at least, the most part of the compositions you choose to perform during the course and some disc which contains some of the compositions that you are going to study during the course.

We will carry out different activities from different Chapters applied to the compositions. Here below, we specify the activities that we are going to carry out, indicating the Chapter to which they belong to. We will approach an activity when we have completed the previous one satisfactorily.

We will carry out next activities in all the classes:

- **Learning how to study** (Chapter XII): explain how to study each activity we suggest.
- Monitoring the **posture** (Chapter I) and the **bellows technique** (Chapter II): explaining how it affects his interpretation of the composition.
- **Listening to himself** (Chapter IX): we will make him aware of the importance of the perception of his own sound.

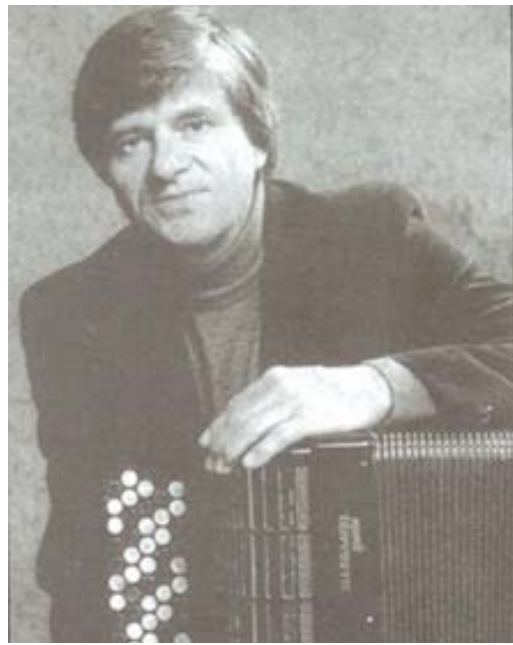
In addition, for the study of the composition we will carry out the next sequence of activities:

1. **Aesthetic analysis** (Chapter V).
2. **Listen** to several versions of the piece of music (Chapter IX).
3. **Analysis** in broad strokes and important motives (Chapter V).
4. Adapt the **registration** of the piece of music to the registration of the student's accordion (Chapter III).
5. **Fingering** (Chapter III): explain where he can apply use fingering automatisms (scales, octaves, thirds, etc.), suggest fingerings for the most complicated passages and ask him to finger it.
6. Read and study with **separate hands** (Chapter VI): reading difficulties (additional lines, complicated rhythms, polyphony, etc.), reductions (structural elements and accessories, etc.).
7. **Supervise the fingering** he has decided, correcting what necessary in a motivated manner (Chapter III).
8. Reading and studying with **both hands together** (Chapter VI): indicate the parts where there is difficulty for coordination.

9. **Technical development** (Chapter III): analysis of the most complicated passages indicating him how to solve the difficulties.
10. Study of the articulations (Chapter IV).
11. Practice **specific elements**: ornamentation (Chapter III), bellows' effects (Chapter II), etc.
12. Rhythm and pulse precision (Chapter V).
13. Detail the dynamics in the composition (Chapter II): high points, development...
14. **Phrasing** (Chapter V).
15. Adjust the **tempo** (Chapter V).
16. Settle the **bellows' changes** (Chapter II).
17. **General supervision**: pulse, general coordination, etc. (Chapter V).
18. **Memorization** (Chapter XII).
19. Preparation of **public interpretation** (Chapter XI).



Giovanni Gagliardi



Mogens Ellegaard



Friedrich Lips

CHAPTER VI: MUSIC READING WITH ACCORDION

Chapter VI: Section I ACCORDION NOTATION

Accordion writing examples:

Standard Basses (MII)



Free Basses (MIII)



Accordion writing elements

MANUALS



Free Basses (MIII)



Standard Basses (MII)

M, m, 7, d (dis)

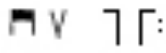
M, m, 7, d (Dis).

Abbreviations for the MII chords (non-exclusive): major, minor, seventh, dominant seventh chord and diminished seventh chord respectively; standardized by the A.A.A. (American Accordion Assotiation).

REGISTERS

(see Chapter III: Section VII)

BELLOWS NOTATION

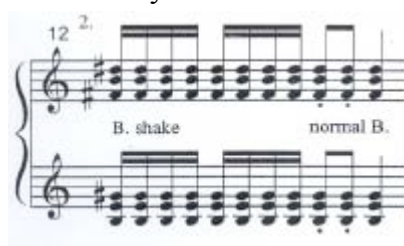
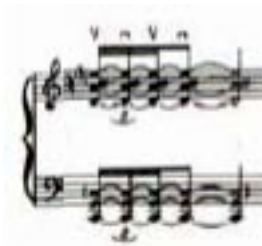


Open /close



Bellows shake (b.s.), bellows tremolo, bellows articulation, and so on. Rhythmic articulation of the sound by alternate movement of the bellows, similar to the arc tremolo in the string instruments.

Other ways to indicate the Bellows Shake:



Sound produced by the air valve, as a sound element with musical function.

Other performing figures



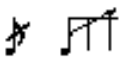
Maintained sound.



Speed up regularly.



Slow down regularly.



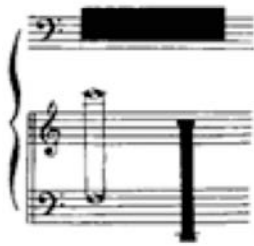
Play as fast as possible.



Fermatas, less long or more long respectively, depending on the rhythmic/temporal context.

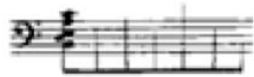


The highest sound and the deepest one that can be emitted, respectively.



Fill all the sound space in black with instruments belonging to a same family (string), in halftones' distance. Cluster.

For piano players: attack with the elbow in the indicated tessitura, pressing white or black keys, approximately, depending on what is indicated.



Chapter VI Section II:
BAROQUE CIPHER AND AMERICAN CIPHER

Chapter VI: Section II.1
Principles of the Baroque Cipher and the American Cipher

Exposition about the Baroque Cipher Bass

- **Chords construction:** It is based on ciphers that are put under the voice of the bass. The main ciphers are the following:

5 This cipher indicates that the chord is in fundamental state from the bass.
3 Usually it is omitted, so that any note without cipher is a chord in fundamental state. For instance: C in the bass with this cipher, corresponds to the chord C-E-G (C Major).

6 It indicates that the chord is in first inversion, or in other words, the note of the bass corresponds to the 3rd of the chord. For example: E in sixth corresponds to the chord E-G-C or E-C-G, both are the same chord: C Major.

6 It indicates that the chord is in 2nd inversion, that is to say, that the bass corresponds to the dominant of the chord (5th). For instance: G in forth-sixth, corresponds to the chord C Major.

7 It indicates the chord with seventh minor in fundamental state. For example: C in seventh is C-E-G-Bb.

6 It corresponds to the chord with seventh in first inversion (3rd in the bass).
5

4 It is the chord with seventh in second inversion (5th in the bass).
3

2 It is the chord with seventh in third inversion (seventh in the bass).

It can be indicated in each number:

- Alteration: b6 or #6
- Leading note: 7+, +2, +4/3, +6/5, etc.
- Diminished interval ♯

Cadences (Exposition)

Here there are the most important types of cadences and the tonal grades they form:

- Perfect cadences: V-I, IV-V-I, II-V-I using different ciphers
- Plagal cadences: IV-I, V-IV-I... using different ciphers
- Broken cadences: V-VI, IV-V-VI, II-V-VI using different ciphers

American Cipher (Exposition)


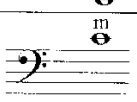
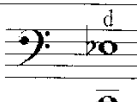
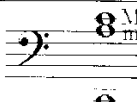
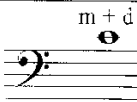
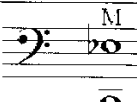
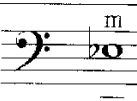
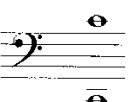
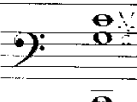
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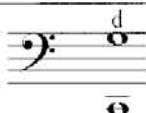



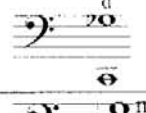
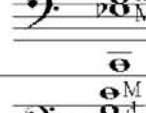
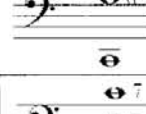


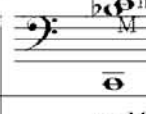
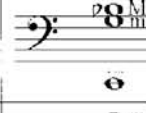
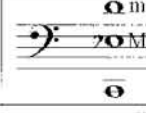

(1) Pictures taken from the book “Jazz Theory and Improvisation Studies for accordion” by Ralph Stricker

Chords formation in MII (Exposition)

(2)

	Acorde <i>Chord</i>	Notas (intervalos) constituyentes <i>Constituent notes</i>	Cifrado(s) usual(es) <i>Usual notation</i>	Formación mediante bajos standard <i>Formation in standard bass buttonboard</i>	Notación bajo standard <i>Standard bass notation</i>
Triadas <i>Triads</i>	Mayor <i>Major</i>	1. 3. 5	C	Do + Do M	
	Menor <i>Minor</i>	1. b3. 5	Cm. C-	Do + Do m	
	Quinta Aumentada <i>Augmented Triad</i>	1. 3. #5	C+	Se debe formar con la mano derecha <i>Only possible in right hand</i>	
	Quinta Disminuida <i>Diminished Triad</i>	1. b3. b5	C°	Do + Mib d	
Sextas <i>Sixths</i>	Mayor Sexta <i>Major with Added Sixth</i>	1. 3. 5. 6	C(6)	Do + Do M + La m	
	Menor Sexta <i>Minor with Added Sixth</i>	1. b3. 5. 6	Cm(6). C-6	Do + Do m + Do d	
Séptimas <i>Sevenths</i>	Menor Séptima <i>Minor Seventh</i>	1. b3. 5. b7	Cm7. C-7	Do + Mib M	
	Menor Séptima Quinta Disminuida (Séptima de Sensible) <i>Half-diminished Seventh</i>	1. b3. b5. b7	Cm7(b5). C-7(b5); Cø7	Do + Mib m	
	Séptima Dominante <i>Dominant Seventh</i>	1. 3. 5. b7	C7	Do + Do 7 (sin la quinta/without the fifth) Do + Do M + Sol d (completo/complete)	 

(2)

				Do + Sol d (completo/complete)	
Séptima Dominante Quinta Aumentada <i>Dominant Seventh with Augmented Fifth</i>	1, 3, #5, b7	C7(#5), C+7	Hace falta la mano derecha para completar el acorde. (Tener en cuenta que Do7 en la izquierda no contiene el Sol natural) <i>Right hand is required. (The fifth is missing in the left hand Do7)</i>		
Mayor Séptima Mayor <i>Major Seventh</i>	1, 3, 5, 7	CMaj7	Do + Mi m		
Séptima Disminuida <i>Diminished Seventh</i>	1, b3, b5, bb7	C°7	Do + Do d (sin la quinta/without the fifth)		
			Do + Solb d (completo/complete)		
Menor Novena <i>Minor Ninth</i>	1, b3, 5, b7, 9	Cm9	Do + Mib M + Sol m		
Novena Dominante <i>Dominant Ninth</i>	1, 3, 5, b7, 9	C9	Do + Do M + Sol d		
Novena Dominante Quinta Aumentada <i>Dominant Ninth with Augmented Fifth</i>	1, 3, #5, b7, 9	C9(#5)	Do + Do 7 + Mi 7		
Mayor Novena <i>Major Ninth</i>	1, 3, 5, 7, 9	CMaj9	Do + Do M + Sol M		
Menor Oncena <i>Minor Eleventh</i>	1, b3, 5, b7, 9, 11	Cm11	Do + Do m + Sib M		
Oncena Dominante <i>Dominant Eleventh</i>	1, 5, b7, 9, 11 (sin 3 / without 3)	C11	Do + Sol m + Sib M		
Menor Trecena <i>Minor Thirteenth</i>	1, b3, 5, b7, 9, 11, 13	Cm13	Do + Mib M + Re m		
Trecena Dominante <i>Dominant Thirteenth</i>	1, 3, 5, b7, 9, 13 (sin 11 / without 11)	C13	Do + Sol m + La m		

(2) Pictures taken from the book “Pun txan txan” by Ricardo Llanos

Chapter VI: Section II.2

Ciphred Bass Exercises

EXERCISE no.1: indicate which type they are and perform the following cadences written in Baroque cypher:



EXERCISE no.2: Perform the following American cypher bass exercise:

Voice

The image displays a series of chords and a melody line in treble clef. The chords are written above the staff, and the melody is written below. The chords are: Dm, Gm, A, Dm, Gm, A, Dm, A7, Dm, Gm, Am, Dm, Gm, Bb, Am7, Dm, Bb, F, Am, Dm, Dm, Gm, A, Dm, Gm, A, Dm, A7, Dm, Gm, Am, Dm, Gm, Bb, Am7, Dm, Bb, F, Am, Dm. The melody line is written in treble clef and consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes.

Chapter VI: Section III **SIGHT-READING**

Chapter VI: Section III.1 **Basic Sight-Reading Principles**

Exposition about the basic Sight-Reading Principles

1- Previous Analysis

You will have to analyse the composition paying attention to elements such as:

- Which the beat and the tempo are.
- The tessitura.
- Which tone it is in.
- The accidental alterations that may have.
- The possibility of applying patterns or postures when fingering.
- The most complicated rhythms.
- etc.

2- Registration

You will have to decide which registers to play it with.

3- Previous Reading

It is convenient that you previously only hum it with separate hands or at least you do so in the passages that you consider more complicated a priori.

4- Awareness of the own technical possibilities

If you consider some passage is over your possibilities of sight-reading, you can simplify it, for example removing the intermediate notes from some chord (if any), touching only the first note or the note that goes with the main pulses of the beat, etc.

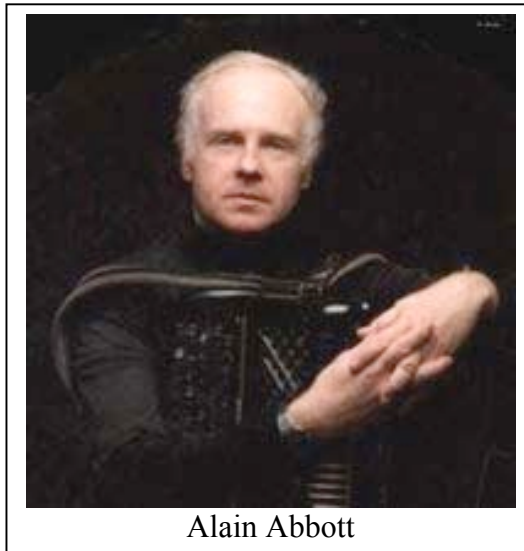
5- First performance

When you first perform it, choose a slow tempo and constantly think about the pulse: it is the most important element, even more than the notes!

Chapter VI: Section III.2 **Sight-Reading Practice**

Sight-Reading EXERCISES

We will practice sight reading using the 1st book of the “*Cours Complet de lecture à vue*” by A. Abbott, Where we can find 38 very useful progressive exercises.



Alain Abbott

EXERCISE No. III

Look for at least one score you like on the internet or the library of the centre and we will sight-read them in class.

Chapter no. 6: Section IV **READING OF THE** **WORKS OF THE COURSE**

After having carried out with the teacher activities and exercises from other Chapters such as aesthetic and formal analysis, fingering, etc. Start to read the musical works of the course slowly and by passages repeating each passage until it comes off 3 consecutive times well and with separate hands.

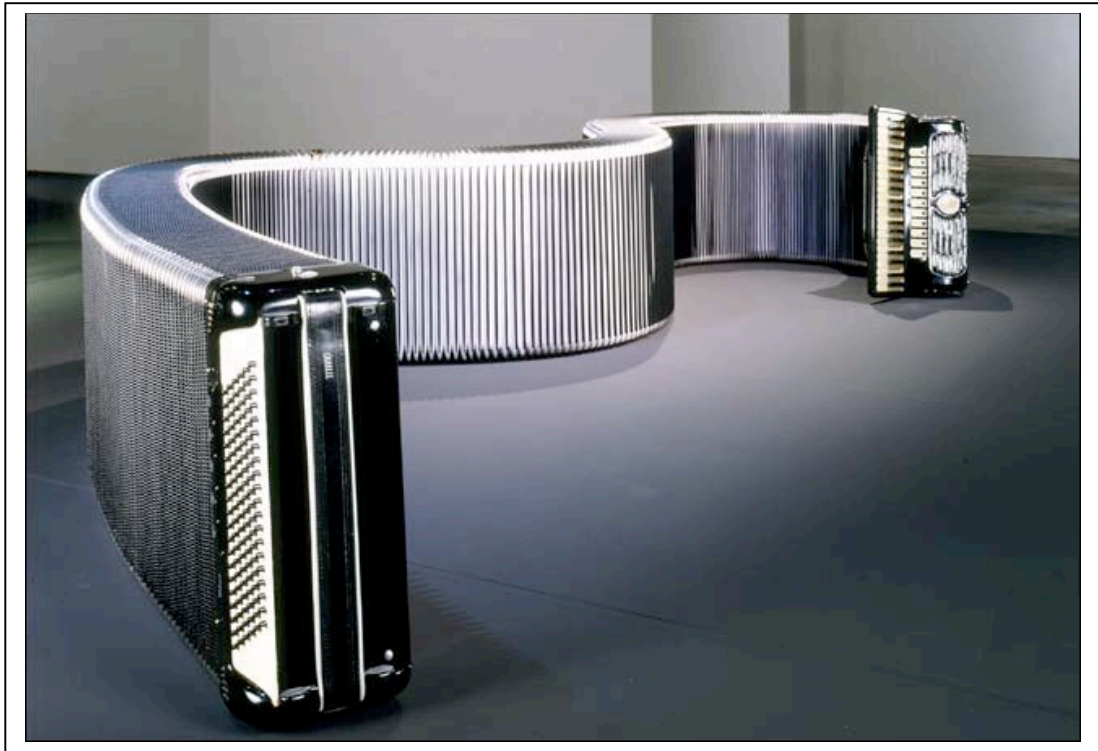
When you are able to play the work with separate hands, start studying it with both hands together and by passages. Repeat each passage until it comes off 3 consecutive times well. In case it comes off 3 consecutive times wrong, play the passage again with separate hands.

CHAPTER VII

MEMORIZING MUSIC

You must learn one of the works of the course by heart. In order to that:

- Play the work in passages, trying to play it once with score and other time without score, until you memorize the passage.
- Play an entire section by heart and after doing so, analyze where your memory failed. Work on that passage with score first, and after by heart.
- Play the entire piece by heart and do the same as before: analyze where your memory failed and work on that passage specifically.



CHAPTER VIII: IMPROVISATION, IMITATION AND MUSICAL CREATION

Chapter VIII: Section I IMPROVISATION IN THE GROUP CLASS

We will carry out the following activities in the group class and after each improvisation we will discuss what we have done.

ACTIVITY no. 1

In the group class we will practice improvisation on a 4/4 rhythmic computer base (120 of metronome the crotchet) in C Major. Each student will improvise during 4 bars with the C Major scale while the rest of students play a constant pedal C in whole notes.

- **1st exercise:** improvise using exclusively half notes.
- **2nd exercise:** improvise using crotchets.
- **3rd exercise:** improvise using any rhythmic combination.

ACTIVITY no. 2

Each student will improvise during 4 bars on a 4/4 rhythmic computer base (120 of metronome a crotchet) with the next harmonic structure: I-V-I-V. Students who are not improvising will play some of them the bass of this harmony and the others the chords of this harmony using all of them crotchets.

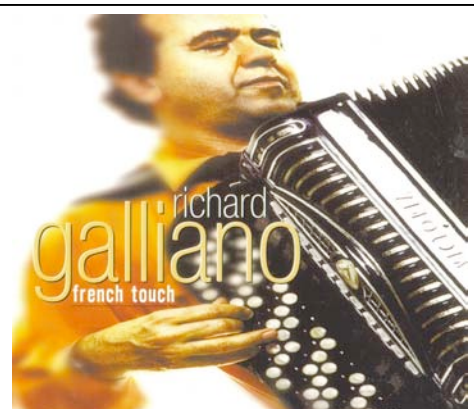
- **4th exercise:** improvise in C Major and the student who improvises can use half tones and crotchets.
- **5th exercise:** the student who improvises can use any rhythmic formula.
- **6th and 7th exercises:** we will do the same in C Major using the harmonic scale.



Gus Viseur



Art Van Damme



Richard Galliano

ACTIVITY no. 3

We will improvise on I-V-I-V in different tones, using different rhythmic formulas and with different rhythmic bases.

ACTIVITY no. 4

We will improvise on harmonic bases made about popular pieces that by default appear in the Band in a Box software. We will explain the harmonic basis of the chosen piece and the resources that can be used on it.

ACTIVITY no. 5

Students will look for improvised music on the internet, in the music library of the centre or elsewhere, you will bring it to class and you will explain what you have brought.



Luciano Biondini

Chapter VIII: Section II **IMITATION IN THE GROUP CLASS**

In group sessions in which we work on imitation, we will do different imitations using different rhythmic bases in 4/4, 3/4 and 6/8 of the Band in a Box software. After each imitation we will discuss what we have done.

1st ACTIVITY

We will use a predetermined posture and previously agreed between the teacher and the students.

- 1st exercise: the teacher will suggest a theme and the students must imitate it in unison.
- 2nd exercise: The same but now you will imitate it one by one.
- 3rd exercise: we will make a circle all together, one of you will suggest and the next one in the circle will imitate, and so on, successively.

2nd ACTIVITY

The teacher will suggest two or more different postures and we will practice combining them, the same 3 exercises as in the 6th Activity.

3rd ACTIVITY

We will perform the same 3 exercises without prefixing postures but choosing a prefixed tone in order to propose imitations.

Chapter VIII: Section II **MUSICAL CREATION**

The teacher will explain in the group class different compositional resources such as the creation of a theme with a question and answer harmonized basically using some of the textures exposed in Chapter III in which this content is included.

On the basis of this theme, you will have to compose section A. In section B you will be able to freely compose what you want, as long as it contrasts in character with section A. The last section will be a re-exposure of A in which you can make some change or variation of the same.

You may also not follow this scheme and compose freely, although you will have to justify this fact.

In the individual class you will present your work and the teacher will advise you and propose different options.

Students will present in a group class the result of their work before the classmates and among all we will discuss the compositions and, if necessary, the teacher will propose different alternatives for making some last-minute change.



Wladislav Solotarev



Sofia Gubaidulina

CHAPTER IX: AUDITORY EDUCATION

Chapter IX: Section I LISTENING

ACTIVITY no.1

Before the group class where we carry out this activity, the teacher will have distributed to pupils a varied CD collecting music from different eras, cultures and styles. You should listen to it and write a little composition where you should indicate:

- the 3 pieces you liked the most, why and what it reminds you of.
- the 3 pieces you least liked, why and what it reminds you of.

The teacher, in the class, will explain you what each of the pieces you have listened to is and some of their characteristics, while you listen to passages of the pieces. Afterwards you will briefly present your work to the rest of the class and we will discuss it among all.

ACTIVITY no.2

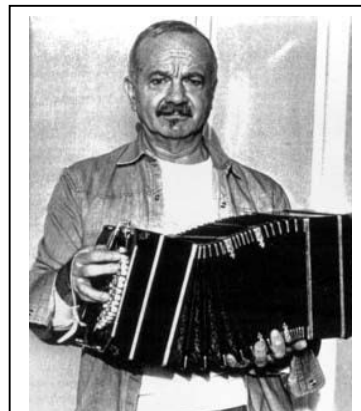
You should bring to the group class where we carry out this activity your favourite song and make a brief presentation about it: author, interpreter, style, etc. and why you like it. During the class we will listen to the music you have chosen and your exposition on it. Finally, we will discuss about it all.

ACTIVITY no. 3

You should bring a musical work, a song or a piece interpreted by an accordion player to class and make a short exposition on it: author, interpreter, era, style, culture, etc. During the class we will listen to the music you have chosen and your exposition on it. Finally, we will discuss about it all.



Phil Cunningham



Astor Piazzolla

CHAPTER X

ENSEMBLE PLAYING

You should carry out the following activities in each of the works that we play in the group class:

Debate on aesthetic analysis

You must bring to the class in which we perform this activity information about the composer, the work, and the era. We will discuss these aspects in class.

Formal analysis

The teacher will explain aspects of the work such as the language used, the tone (if any), the sections in which the work is divided, the main motifs...

Aspects related to other chapters

You should study your score following the next steps:

- Hum it
- Adapt the registration of the piece to your accordion
- Digitize it
- Read it and study it with separate hands
- Study it with both hands together
- Maintain always the appropriate posture
- Manage the bellows properly
- Articulations
- Dynamics
- Bellows changes

Nevertheless, in case you have any doubt about any aspect, you can ask your questions to the teacher and work on them in individual classes.

Pulse

We will all play the work together, paying special attention to maintain the pulse that the teacher will mark as an orchestra conductor, with some percussion instrument, playing the accordion, with computer rhythmic bases, etc. Although when you perform it more or less successfully, you should play it without the teacher's help.

Phrasing

On the basis of the analysis of the work, its character and applying jointly elements such as articulations and dynamics, we will work the phrasing of each score of the work with the teacher.

Tempo

When we have relatively learnt the work, we will agree among all of us the tempo at which you should interpret it. To do this we will rely on the speed that is indicated in the work, provided that we can keep it in a coherent way. In case not, we can perform the work at a slightly lower speed, in which you find yourself comfortable.

Different textures listening

Each member of the group should know other member's score and listen to them at the same time as they play it. Each member should stand out from the rest where and when appropriate.

Final supervision

The teacher will help us to perform all the elements that still need to be improved to finish the version. He will especially remember the formal analysis of the work to stand out from all, the high points of the work.



CHAPTER XI

PLAYING IN PUBLIC

Everybody gets nervous when playing in public, and moreover, we will do it several times during the course: at least once a trimester in classroom hearing and many other times in other kinds of extracurricular activities.

Here are some tips to help you play in public:

- An hour before the concert, take your accordion and play slowly and separately the different passages. It's very important to do it SLOWLY!!! If you do it fast or at the right speed, you may start getting more and more nervous.
- Play a while and then rest. Don't keep the entire hour playing.
- Try to do your best to feel like playing, you will get a round of applause!!
- When it's time already: put your accordion on and fasten the straps.
- Enter the stage with a quiet step, stand next to the chair, greet the audience (keeping your legs together) and sit calmly.
- Before you start, put yourself in the proper position, as we have studied in Chapter I.
- Switch the appropriate registers and set the lever in the right position.
- Think about the rhythm of the work so as not to start too fast or too slowly.
- While you are playing think only about the music you are playing, sing inside what you're playing and listen to it at the same time.
- It is very likely that you get wrong: don't be afraid. EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES!!!! The important thing is to keep maintaining the pulse and that the mistakes are noticed as little as possible, because there will be mistakes for sure, and in case not, you are a genius!!!
- Think that no one is going to think badly and will say nothing bad even if you are wrong. Whatever you do, they are going to applaud you a lot, because everyone will appreciate all the work you have done.
- Don't think about what you have done or what you have left to do: enjoy the music you are playing as much as possible. It doesn't matter if you have made a mistake before and don't think a passage that you don't know very well is soon. We repeat: ENJOY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE MOMENT!!
- When you finish, let the music go extinct. Music finishes at least 5 seconds after the work is finished. People will start to applaud. Stand up, greet the audience to thank them for the applause and leave the stage calmly.

CHAPTER XII: LEARNING HOW TO STUDY

How to study correctly at home

- Read the notebook of the pupil to remember what we have explained in class.
- Analyze what should I study.
- Think about how I should study
- Study each problem separately and generally very slowly. It must come off at least 3 consecutive times well, because coming off well just once doesn't mean that it is already right.
- Play each problem separately at speed, in order to check if the existing difficulty has been overcome.
- Play a bit longer passages which contain more than one of the problems.
- Play the whole musical work.
- Analyze what has happened and write it schematically in the student's notebook to remember it.
- Write down in the notebook of the student how much time you have been learning and after discussing with the teacher the degree of use of the work.



CHAPTER XIII: KNOWLEDGE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE INSTRUMENT

Chapter XIII: Section I: MAINTENANCE OF THE ACCORDION

Chapter XIII: Section I.1 Principles to maintain your accordion in good condition

Tips to maintain your accordion in good condition

In order to conserve it:

1. When you finish playing, store the accordion in the case or bag to protect it from dust.
2. Keep it out of very cold, very warm or very wet places.
3. Don't clean it with agents containing solvents or alcohol.
4. Do not interfere with the inside of the accordion unless you have knowledge for it.
5. It must be tuned at least once a year.

For playing it:

1. When we take the accordion, it is advisable first to open and close the accordion gently and then make each of the reeds sound on piano (by means of chromatic scales opening and closing the bellows), before beginning playing, to heat them and achieve improving their response in the future.
2. It is advisable to play a little every day: the mechanisms and the reeds are numb in case you don't play but they wear extremely if you play too much. When you play many hours a day it is advisable to follow strictly the advice we here give.
3. It is convenient not to play too loudly when the accordion has just been tuned (for at least a month) or, even more so, in case the accordion is new (for two months).
4. To press the MII/MIII converting lever, make sure that you are not pressing another button at the same time and operate it firmly and safely, because it can get stuck easily.

To carry it:

1. Avoid blows. The instrument bags are preferable to the trolleys, to avoid continuous vibrations and typical hits in situations such as going down the steps... In case you are using the trolley, try it to have some damping system or at least large and thick wheels.
2. In case it is carried from one place to another with very different temperatures, it is advisable to leave it for a while (half an hour), in order it to acclimatize to the new temperature conditions.

Chapter XIII. Section I.2

Do you know how to take care of your accordion?

Test

- 1- When I finish studying (right or false):
 - a. I leave it on the floor and I cover it with a fabric to protect it from the dust.
 - b. I leave it in a corner in my room without covering it
 - c. I keep the accordion inside the case

- 2- Among the next sentences, which are right and which are false:
 - a. Leaving the accordion near a stove can melt the wax that binds the tiles of the accordion.
 - b. Even if you keep the accordion in a wet place, the reeds can't be rust.
 - c. The accordion can be cleaned with agents containing solvents or alcohol.
 - d. Opening the accordion or handling inside it is risky without having the necessary knowledge.
 - e. An accordion that is not played gets numb over time.
 - f. The converting lever must not be pressed while you have other button pressed.
 - g. Accordion is not affected by sudden changes of temperature.
 - h. When I carry it with a trolley, the accordion enjoys the jumps and, even more, getting hits when going up stairs.
 - i. It is advisable to bring it to refine at least once a year.



Chapter XIII. Section II
TYPES OF ACCORDION

A- Diatonic Accordion:

- It is used principally in folklore
- It has two keyboards: one for playing the melody and the other one for accompaniment.
- If you press a key, it sounds a different note when opening or closing the bellows.



B- Chromatic Accordion:

- When pressing a key or button it sounds the same note when opening or closing the bellows.
- There are two types:

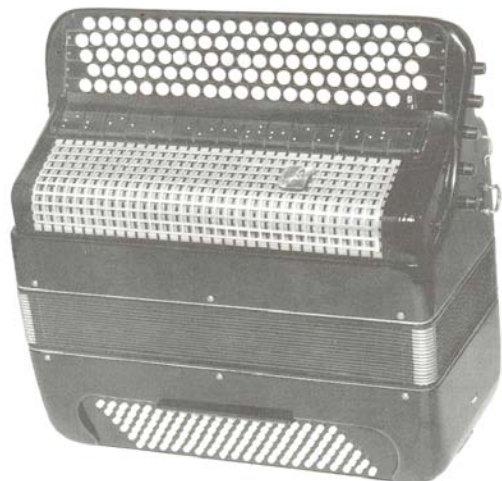
B.1: Standard Accordion:

- It has two keyboards: one for playing the melody and the other one for the accompaniment.
- There are two types: the most common ones are the ones with keys, but there are also button accordions.

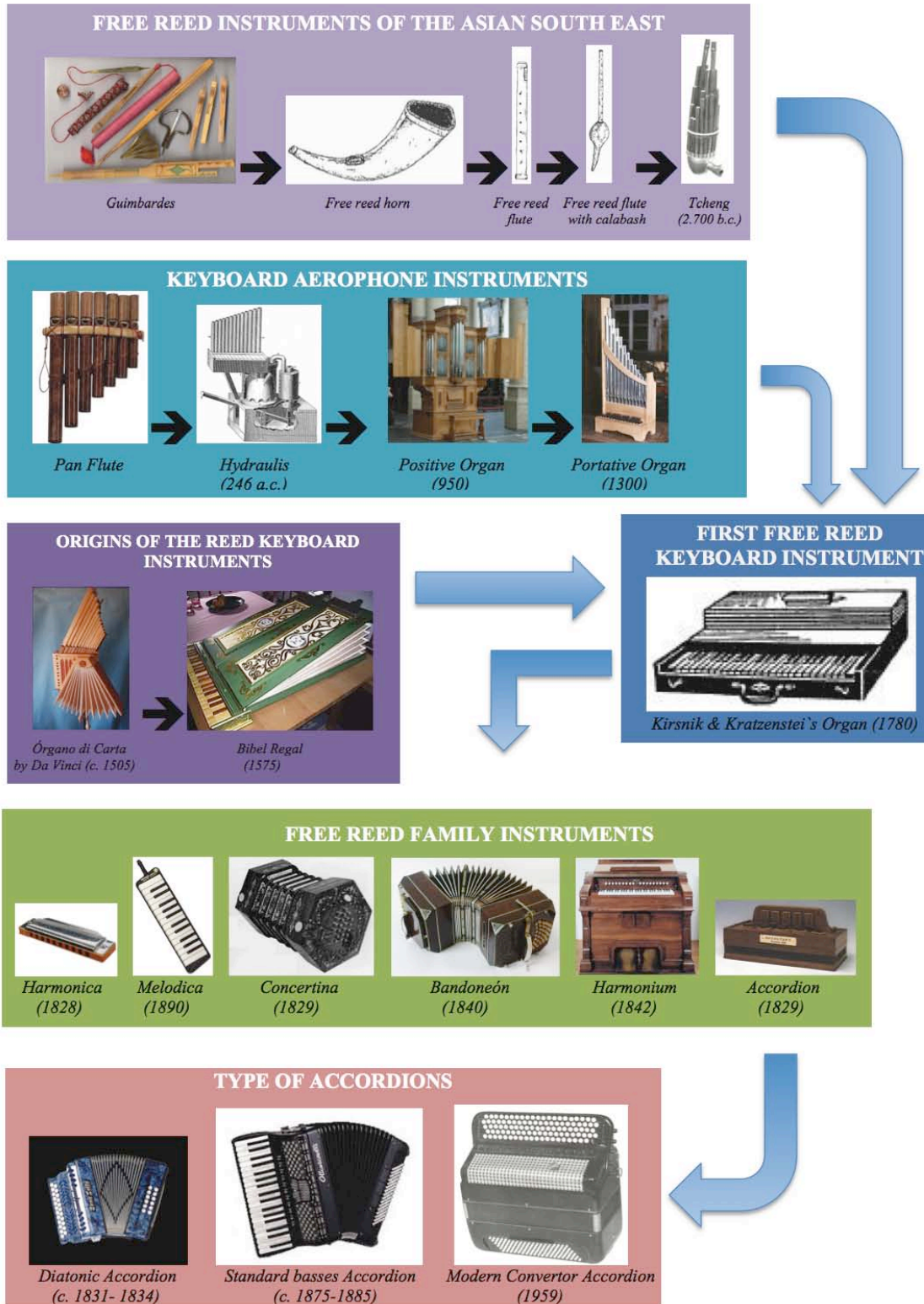


B.2: Convertor Accordion:

- It is used in classical music and contemporary avant-garde music.
- It has two keyboards and both can play melody or accompaniment.
- Generally, they have buttons, but they can also have keys. The first ones have many advantages compared to the second ones.



Chapter XIII. Sección III EVOLUTION OF FREE REED INSTRUMENTS



EVOLUTION OF THE ACCORDION

