

ACCORDION LIFE TODAY

Ivy's Music *Enthusiasm, Smiles and Accordion*

WHAT'S YOUR LEARNING STYLE?

It's how you learn best.

MUSICAL SPINE

*Is your left hand
technique causing you
to make mistakes?*

BE A SCALE HERO

*Learn scales for both the
right and left hands.*



WELCOME

FROM THE EDITOR



PHOTO BY RYAN LINDBERG

IT IS THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER, and new and exciting things are around the corner here at Accordion Life! We appreciate all of you that read this magazine, and the kind comments you share are so encouraging. Please let us know what kinds of features you would like to see in our quarterly issues, as we are here to help you in your journey with music.

The question to our readers for this *Accordion Life Today* Issue is, **WHAT TECHNICAL TIP HAS HELPED YOU THE MOST WITH REGARDS TO LEARNING THE ACCORDION?**

For me, as a young player, I wasn't exposed to different accordion techniques other than the basic elements. That changed when I met Frédéric Deschamps in France. He gave me a new respect for the accordion and special techniques that were *only* for the accordion. I didn't realize I played the accordion in the same manner one plays piano! They are both keyboard instruments, but one is a percussion instrument and one is a reed instrument, and each requires completely different touches and technique approaches. So grateful to you Fred!! Let me know your answer by emailing it to: submissions@accordionlife.com, and we'll share your answers in the next issue.

Look forward to talking to you again in the next issue -- September 20, 2016.

Kindly,

~Patricia Bartell

Patricia Bartell
EDITOR IN CHIEF

SEND YOUR RESPONSE TO: submissions@accordionlife.com

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS AUGUST 20, 2016

ACCORDION LIFE TODAY

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THE COVER
IVY EYER PHOTOGRAPHED BY CAREY EYER

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Questions, comments and submissions may be sent to submissions@accordionlife.com.

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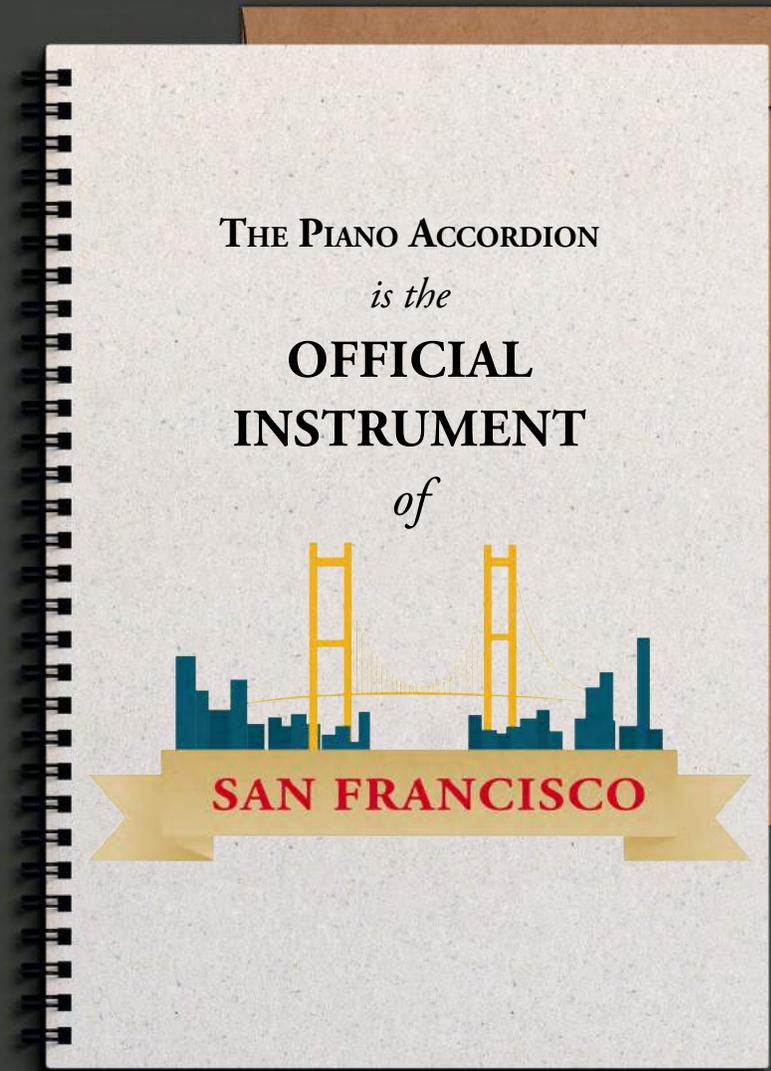
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~ Completely Necessary ~

RANDOM
Tidbits



What is Your Favorite Piece to Play on the Accordion?

Readers share their top favorites!

I'M 68 YEARS OLD and retired, but I played professionally and taught for many years -- began when I was 6, and was taught by my Dad who was an accordion teacher. I consider myself an accomplished accordionist and still play daily. Here in St. Augustine, where I now live, I volunteer my time doing singalongs for the elderly (older than me) in conjunction with St. John's County Council on Aging.

My favorite piece(s): I would have to use the plural. I really enjoy the semi classics of Italian origin such as *O Sole Mio*, *Torna a Surriento*, *Eh Marie*, *O'Marienello*, etc. But I also really like *Dizzy Fingers*, *Czardas*, *Scherzo* and many of Magnante's arrangements such as *Waltz Allegro*, *Solfeggiato*, *12th Street Rag*, *Accordiana*, etc.

So picking a favorite piece would be like picking a favorite dish of pasta! LOL!

I'm looking forward to reading your magazine on a regular basis.

Ed Manfredi, St. Augustine, FL

MY FAVORITE piece to play on accordion is *Stay* by Rihanna.

Jack C. DiBenedetto, Tamarac, FL

I LOVE TO PLAY the "oldies" songs my parents used to sing in the car when we went on vacation, songs like *Harbor Lights*, *Que Sera*, *Church in the Valley in the Wildwood*, etc. The songs bring back those memories of happy times with my parents and I feel like they are listening to me again.

Gail Nash, Sooke, British Columbia ■



BE A SCALE HERO

BY CORRIE SAMS

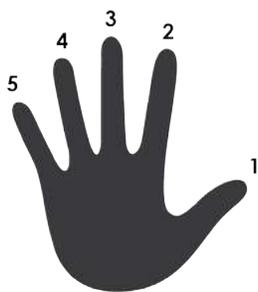


Scales? Why would I need to know my scales? Why should I be a Scale Hero? That's a great question! Let me answer it for you.

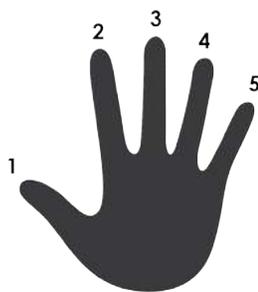
Scales are extremely valuable for many things. They make a great warm-up and agility exercise, but more importantly, when you know your scales you can more easily deal with key changes in any given pieces. You will be familiar with which sharps or flats you have in that key because you practiced that scale and know it well ... and it will help tremendously with improvisation! Today, we will venture through the C, F and G Major scales for both the treble and bass keyboards. Don't worry, bass scales are simpler than you might think, so hang in there.

BASIC TRAINING

We'll start with a basic concept that you may already know, but that's good to review -- finger numbers. Take a quick look at the diagram below. If you remember that "Thumbs are always 1," you'll have it made. Let's get started mastering those scales!



Left Hand

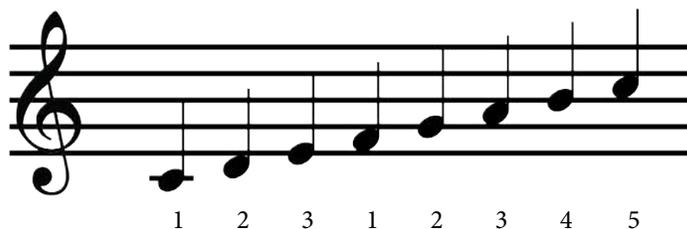


Right Hand

THE C MAJOR SCALE

The C major scale is perhaps the simplest scale. No sharps, no flats -- this is an all natural scale that is great for practicing fluidity and assigning various articulations for fun and musical growth.

For the purposes of this article, we're going to cover one octave for all of our scales. On this page, I have the notation for a C major scale, going up. Finger numbers are below. If you place your thumb on C, then line up each finger side-by-side on the white keys; you will be ready to go!

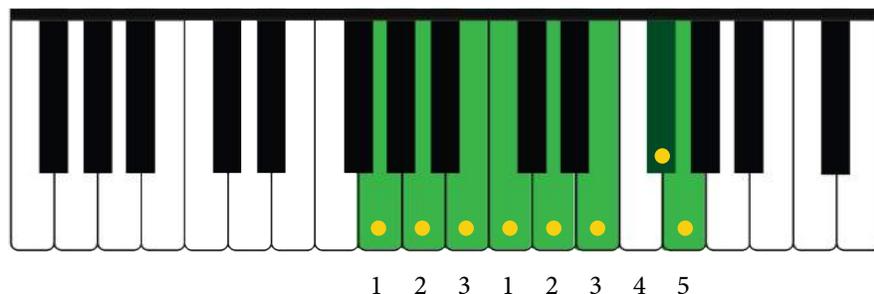
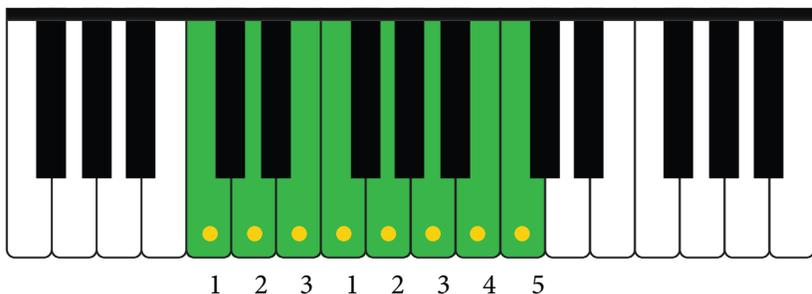


Start by playing fingers 1, 2, 3 in order, then drop your right shoulder so your thumb can play the next white key up without having to go completely *under* the 3rd finger, and shift your hand up. Then you just play fingers 1-5 in order. That's your C major scale! If you have never done this before, it might feel strange. But as you continue to do it, you will get more comfortable and begin to develop fluidity and speed!

Check out the next page for a diagram of the C major scale on the keyboard, as well as the F and G major scales.

GOING DOWN TO C

We've gone up the C major scale, but what if you want to go back down? Using the same fingering as before, start where you left off and simply go down each finger, 5-1. When you reach finger 1, drop your shoulder as before, roll finger 3 over to the E and line up each finger, then continue downward until you reach C again.

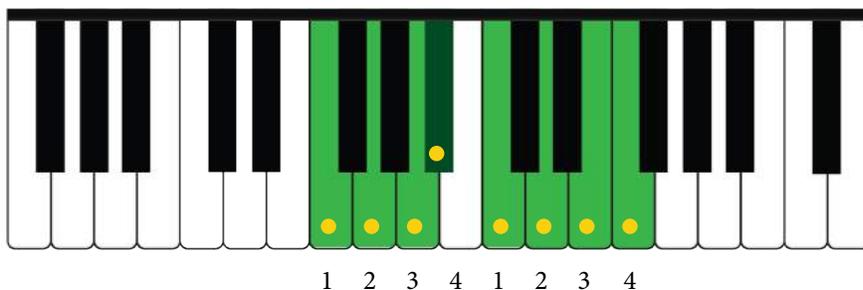
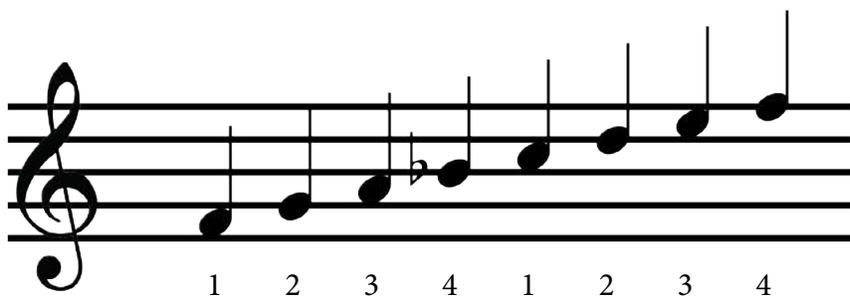


THE G MAJOR SCALE

The key of G has one sharp -- F#. That means that whenever you come to F on your keyboard, it will be a sharp. The fingering for the G major scale is the same as for the C major scale. The only difference is that finger four will be on that F#. See the illustrations to the left and give it a try!

THE F MAJOR SCALE

The F scale has one flat - B flat. So every time you come to the B on your keyboard, it will be B flat (pun intended). This scale is the only one with a different fingering, so watch closely! Start with finger 1 on F and follow the notation and diagram to the right.



THE C MAJOR BASS SCALE

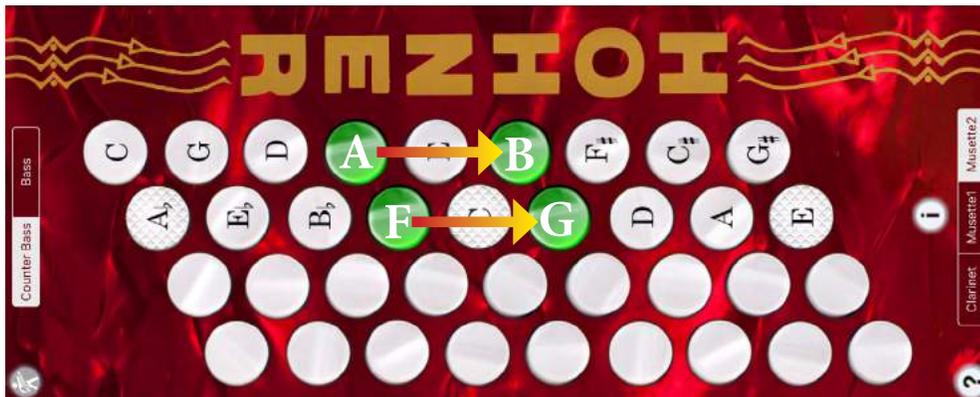
Okay. I know I said that I would teach you the C, F, and G major scales for the bass as well. But, I'm only going to show you the C major scale. Hang in there. The reason is, when you know one major scale on the bass, you know them all! That is one of the cool things about

standard stradella bass. I will first show you the patterns using the *Hobner Piano Squeezebox Accordion app*, then on the next page we'll study the notation and the other scales.



PATTERN ONE

Play C with finger 3, then, skipping one button, reach finger 2 up to play D. Then simply move finger 3 from C to play the counterbass of C, which is E. You're done with the first part! See how the pattern follows a triangular shape?



PATTERN TWO

This one looks a little like a box shape or two parallel lines. Start with finger 4 on F, then play G with finger 2. Move your fingers up to the counterbass row and do the same thing, starting on A.



YOU DID IT!

Congratulations! Now you may finish with finger 3 on C, or start it all over again.

Continue to the next page to see how to apply this to the other scales.

C MAJOR BASS SCALE NOTATION

Let's take a quick look at the notation for the C Bass Scale. To the right, you see the scale with the finger numbers below it. See the underlined ones? In notation, when a bass note is in the counterbass row, it will commonly be underlined.

THE OTHER SCALES

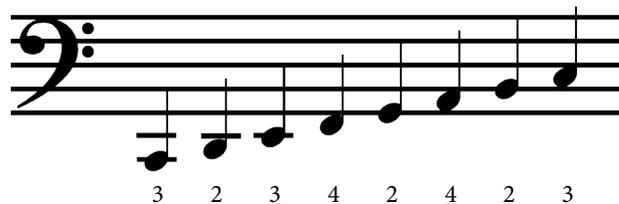
Once you have mastered the C major scale, all you have to do to play the F major scale is start on F and use the same pattern I demonstrated for the C Scale. For a G Scale start on G. The same goes for every other major bass scale there is!

CONCLUSION

Congratulations! You are on your way to becoming a Scale Hero!

In the next issue of *Accordion Life Today*, we will continue our adventures as Scale Heroes. ■

C MAJOR SCALE



F MAJOR SCALE



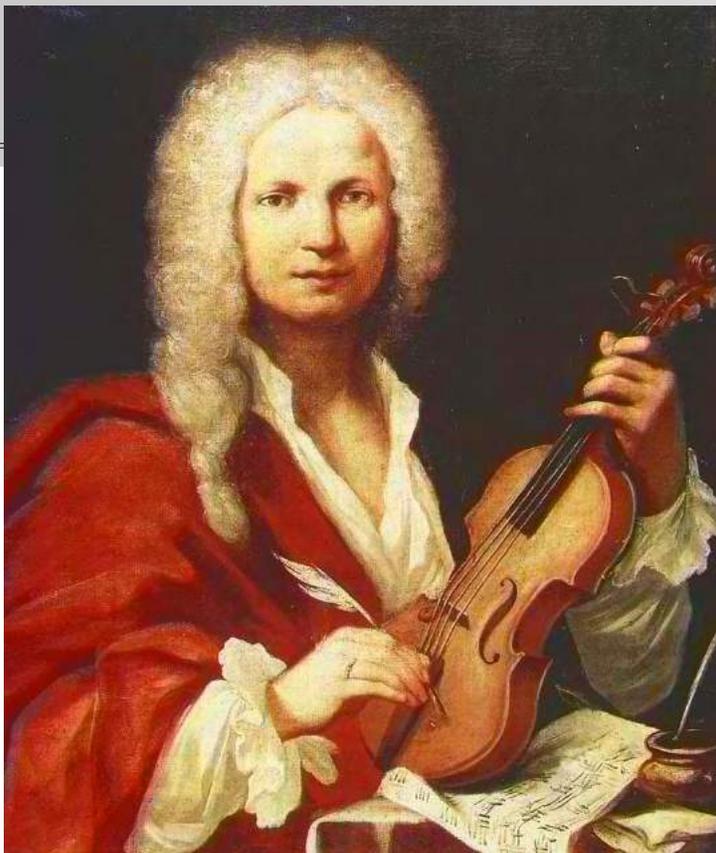
G MAJOR SCALE



WHO WROTE

THIS STUFF?

BY JOHANNA WILSON



ANTONIO VIVALDI

A look at the people who composed our music.

When we pick up a piece of music and sit down to learn or play it, a couple of things catch our eyes immediately, including who wrote it. But just like a quarter note is meaningless to someone who doesn't understand, it's the same way I feel when I see a composer's name but don't know who they are. So, we will learn about some of these people together. The amazing music we play were created by some pretty incredible composers.

THE GREAT VIVALDI

If we rewind a little bit (and by a little I mean about 300 years) we find some remarkable composers that we will be discussing. One is Antonio Vivaldi, or Vivaldi

for short. He was born March 4, 1678 in Venice, Italy. He died on July, 28 1741 in Vienna, Austria. He is recognized as one of the greatest Baroque composers. And if you're like me and have no idea what "Baroque composers" actually means, then let me enlighten you. Baroque was characterized by ornate detail and was popular from 1600 to circa 1750. So this composer was and is very special.

LASTING POPULARITY

Though Vivaldi is not here physically, his music lives on. One of his most famous concertos is, *The Four Seasons*. It was originally composed for the violin and other instruments. Violin was Vivaldi's first and favorite instrument and he normally composed specifically for it. Even though we play his pieces now and call him a genius, sadly, his popularity sprung quickly and vanished even quicker after his death. But in 1926, in a monastery in Piedmont, 14 folios of Vivaldi's work were discovered which started a spark that led to a blaze. Going through life without hearing one of his pieces is a big feat. If you haven't, stop reading this article (yes I'm serious), Google the *Four Seasons* by Vivaldi (my favorite being *Winter*) and listen.

MODERN CLASSICAL SEMIONOV

If we skip forward a little (about another 300 years), we meet a man who is changing accordion history right before our eyes. His name is Viatcheslav Semionov. He was born in 1946 in Trubchevsk, Bryansk in Russia. Following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, he began playing the chromatic accordion at age 7. (He must have been really adorable sitting with his accordion. If I had a picture I would show you.) Moving forward (and not by 300 years), we see he continued his studies at the Rostov Art College and the Gnessins' Musical Pedagogical Institute in Moscow, Russia.

At just 21 years of age he started taking part in accordion competitions in Germany and Bulgaria, in which he placed in the top three. He has performed in more than 30 countries. I would name them all but that would take the rest of the article. :) He started teaching accordion so he could share all that he learned at the Rostov Musical Pedagogical Institute. Some of his most famous students include Youri Shishkin, Anatoliy Zaikin and Youri Dranga.

AWARDS & ACCLAIM

While teaching he earned many titles and awards, including: "Honoured Artist of Russia," Vice President of the Music Committee of the Confederation Internationale des Accordeonistes, earned his professorship (so its Professor Viatcheslav Semionov), was awarded the Silver Disk, and he was awarded the highest possible honor, "People's Artist of Russia," by President Boris Yeltsin.

He is a remarkable man who has accomplished so much and will continue to accomplish much more. Some of his most popular pieces are *First Sonata*, *Four Rhapsody*, *Sonata No. 2*, and *Don Rhapsody*. They are amazing pieces and one day you may learn them yourself!

I hope this article provided you some new-found knowledge and you are excited to learn more about composers that lived 300 years ago as much as you like learning about contemporary composers. Amazing people create the incredible music we love to play. Go be inspired! ■



VYACHESLAV SEMIONOV

Deschamps' Technique

BY FRÉDÉRIC DESCHAMPS



Dear Readers, it is with great pleasure that I get back to the rhythm of pedagogical teaching. During the preceding months I helped my students discover some novelties to the repertoire of musette music composed by my friends Nathalie Bernat, Romain Dupuis and others. Following that, I traveled through the various regions of France and especially that of Termignon (Haute Maurienne) organized by our national Pollux. It will be a pleasure to share with you some small, new discoveries we made with the participants in the Senior (all adults) Master Class at Termignon.

THE MUSICAL SPINE (THE LEFT HAND)

At Termignon National Accordion Festival, the ambiance of the “Popular” music, in the most noble sense of the term, is essential. We like to party. We like to dance and enjoy all the sounds of the accordion. And for good reason ... you have accordions on every street corner, in every bar, shop, restaurant, everywhere!

AND whoever says “dance” also says “tempo, rhythm, beat, movement.” And who’s the chief? Who is leading the dance? Who is it that allows you to be one with your partner? It is this left hand! The ugly duckling of the accordion. Ah we do not love this one! You can’t see it, it’s not the melody, the buttons are too small, they are never in the same place, and that’s only part of the list! So during the Termignon Senior Master Class, we spent a little time on the left hand that everybody had neglected — so, after some time, they were convinced of its importance.

The left hand, with typical characteristics in the world of the accordion, I could check again in Termignon and find: the closer you get highs, the more bass is long. The proof, they call it the bâââsse! (I think they need to write well, given how they pronounce it). “It’s to hear it better,” they say ... and how right they are. Of course the bass must make itself heard because it is the one that sets a time for everyone to meet. This can change the way the shoulders move, the way we sit, the way we dance, and the right hand of the accordion -- something we don’t neglect anyway.

Previously I introduced my students to the art of the bass using some compression, a stop of the arm and adding resonance to the bellows. Today I will offer something simpler and more condensed. We will manage the “Poum.”

The onomatopoeia “Poum” sums up the role of bass: a deep sound going through partitions for the world to hear. The method of attacking the bass creates the resonance. In general, the bass of the accordion is played by the bass of the orchestra which brings together all

DREAM TEAM
OF
TERMIGNON



the features of the aforementioned onomatopoeia: long, thick strings produce a deep sound, slightly offset from the difficulty of moving the fingers, and have resonance once put in motion. They take a little time to fade, again because of their morphology.

THE DANGERS OF THE HEAVY BASS

Most likely, you are in the large majority of accordionists who squash your bass deep into the left keyboard, which causes all the sounds to mush together into noise. Of course, if we have our fingers mimic the steps of the dancers to be very regular as they lift into the air after the bass, well ... your fingers also like to lighten the overall sound and help the movements of the dancers (represented by the right hand). So, very often you do not even have time to play the chords in the left hand because your fingers are already deep into the bass keys.

To summarize: the first time you crush the bottom of the keyboard, you hurriedly take your finger off, producing a sharp blow to the outside of the keyboard from the arrival of the first impact, thus not having time to play SINCE the finger was carried away by the movement of dropping into the bass so deeply. Then you retrieve rapidly with your finger, with a quick movement away

from the keyboard, immediately into the first chord, but now you don't have enough time to play this chord because it was delayed by the movement of how you left the bass. (See Photos 1 and 2.)



LEFT HAND FINGER IS FORCEFULLY PRESSED INTO THE BASS BUTTON (1) RELEASED TOO QUICKLY (2)



LEFT-HAND MOVEMENTS AND MIMICRY

We'll do a little experiment to show the problems that such a practice leads to in your right hand.

Put your fingers as shown in Photo 3, index fingers stretched motionless in front of you.

With the right index finger, make a small circle in the air at moderate and regular speeds in a clockwise direction for a few seconds, then stop the movement. (See Photo 4.)

Wait a few seconds, and then with the left index finger make a small square in a clockwise direction, at about the same speed as your right hand's previous circle, while still keeping your right finger pointing straight ahead. (See Photo 5.)

Wait a few seconds and try to make the two movements together with the same direction, same tempo, same size: a circle in the right, a square in the left.

Of course, it doesn't work. The attempt to synchronize the movements fails as in Photo 6.

Now imagine that when you play your left hand as I noted earlier, there is a good chance that your right hand crashed into the keyboard in the same way as the bass did and was ejected in the same way.



There are many exercises to solve this problem, but for now the positive thing is that you become aware of it. You just realize that your rhythm problems can possibly be caused by improper length of the bass, or overly fast release because of the left hand (or both).

Then the solution is simple: watch yourself play before a mirror and focus your attention on the movements of the fingers of your left hand. Try to moderate them,

and your tempo will be stabilized and your right hand lightened.

Until next time for new adventures,

Frédéric Deschamps

Frédéric Deschamps ■



Free SHEET MUSIC

from the team of AccordionLife.com

Every issue of *Accordion Life Today* will include sheet music for your enjoyment!

LA MATTINATA

*“Where you are not there’s no light,
Where you are love is born.”*

The romantic lyrics to *La Mattinata* were composed in 1904 by Ruggero Leoncavallo. It was the first piece composed expressly for the Gramophone Company (present day: His Master’s Voice) and was dedicated to Italian operatic Tenor Enrico Caruso. Italian music is so beautiful, melodic and full of expression. It’s no wonder when one asks for dinner music they request Italian songs. On the next page is one to add to your repertoire if it’s not already in there.

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Level 3

La Mattinata

Ruggero Leoncavallo

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. Measure 1 starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The right hand has a melody with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3. The left hand has a bass line with chords marked 'M' and 'm'. A fingering '7' is indicated in measure 5.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. Measure 6 starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The right hand continues the melody with a triplet in measure 7. The left hand has a bass line with chords marked 'M' and 'm'. A slur is present over the right hand in measure 8.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. Measure 10 starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The right hand has a triplet in measure 11. The left hand has a bass line with chords marked 'M' and 'm'. A slur is present over the right hand in measure 12.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. Measure 14 starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#) in measure 14. The right hand has a triplet in measure 15. The left hand has a bass line with chords marked 'M' and 'm'. A slur is present over the right hand in measure 16.

18

22

26

30

34

38

M 7

43

m 7 M 7 m

48

7 M m M

52

1. 2. 7 M m 7 M

IVY'S MUSIC

The enthusiasm and smiles of a five-year-old accordionist.

INTRODUCTION BY CORRIE SAMS
INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY CAREY EYER



I first met little Ivy Eyer in December of 2015, when she was just four-years-old. Her enthusiasm for everything, especially music, is absolutely endearing. I have rarely seen her without a huge smile. Last month she asked if I had heard her play *Ode To Joy* in her lesson with Yev Nosov that morning. I said no, but that I bet she did a good job. She tucked her head, smiled, and said, “Yes, I do.” It was the cutest thing. We asked her dad, Carey Eyer, to interview Ivy for this issue. Enjoy!

Alright, Ivy, how old are you? Five.

Why did you start playing the accordion? Umm ... because I thought it was a cool instrument.

What do you like about taking lessons with your dad? That it's fun.

What's the rule about music at our house? Don't do it when people are sleeping. **You can always play, but not when people are sleeping.**

Can you tell me what songs you're playing? *Ode to Joy* and *Chester*, and the *Blues*, and *Istanbul* and *Bathtub Gin*.

What's your favorite? My favorite is *Ode To Joy*.

Does everybody in your family play an instrument? No.

Who plays what? I play accordion, Neilia plays violin, Daddy plays accordion, and Mommy plays ... nothing. (Mommy may be taking up bass ukulele soon!)

Does Daddy play anything else? And Daddy plays ukulele.

Does Neilia play anything else? Neilia plays drums and ukulele, and Neilia plays piano.

Do you play with them? Do you play with Neilia and Daddy? Yes.

Do you like those songs? Yes.

Have you ever played in a competition or a festival?
No. Not yet.

Are you going to do it this year? Yes.

Are you excited? YES!

Have you ever performed for anything? Maybe ... yeah!
I have.

When? Remember at *MOOSE?* (Ivy's Preschool)

Yes. Remember when we played our Christmas songs for the senior center? And Street Music Week. (In Spokane, WA, USA)

Yeah, we played three years at Street Music Week. You sang there, didn't you? Yeah.

What songs did you sing? *Sidewalks of New York*, *Twinkle Twinkle*, *Pirate Girls* and last one I can think was *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

Yeah, those are some good songs. Who's your accordion teacher? Yev. (Yev Nosov of *Able To Play Music & AccordionLife.com*)

And what does he teach you? Music.

Yeah, like what? Accordion.

Does he tell you how to do your bellows? Yes!

What does he tell you? Big bellows.

What's Yev like? He's funny and he's awesome!

Is he a good accordion player? Yes.

How good? Really good!

Does he have a band? Yeah.

What do you think about his band? It's infinity awesome!

Is he a good teacher? Yes.

What does he do for you? He teaches me cool stuff.

May we all learn cool stuff! The *Accordion Life* team wishes Ivy the best in her musical adventures. ■

BELOW: IVY PERFORMS FOR SPOKANE STREET MUSIC WEEK TO HELP RAISE MONEY FOR THE 2ND HARVEST FOOD BANK.



*Listen to the audio version of
Ivy's interview online at:
www.AccordionLife.com*

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RESOURCES FOR YOU!

BY CORRIE SAMS

HERE AT ACCORDIONLIFE.COM, we are committed to bringing you quality content. To achieve this, our team meets every month to set goals -- goals to be achieved by the end of the month. We talk about the next level of courses, Single Song Tutorials, articles and more resources to aid our members' learning and skills. Let me take you on a quick, guided tour of what's available.

CORE CURRICULUM SERIES

The meat and potatoes of our courses, the Core Curriculum Series is a step-by-step, interactive way to learn to play the accordion. With both original and well-known music, there is a *variety* of styles to play and enjoy. Taught by educator, performer and adjudicator, Patricia Bartell, the courses are designed to equip you with the skills needed to play accordion correctly, achieve a quality sound, and play music in an artistic way. Follow along with each step-by-step video, download the sheet music and study sheets, play along with the interactive sheet music viewer, ask questions and enjoy learning! Currently available for Piano Accordion with a Preliminary Level and Levels 1-2, keep an eye out for Level 3 which will launch this summer. We also plan on building the Core Curriculum Series for diatonic and chromatic accordions.

SINGLE SONG TUTORIALS

Currently under the supervision of teacher Yev Nosov, the Single Song Tutorials allow you to choose a song based on level and learn it! Step-by-step, Yev takes you through each measure of the song. From the romantic sound of *Under Paris Skies* to the fun, upbeat sound of *Beer Barrel Polka*, there are a variety of styles and skill levels to enjoy. New tutorials are filmed every month.



ONLINE ARTICLES

From learning how music affects your brain, to discovering what accordion type is your perfect match, the articles on AccordionLife.com are added monthly or bi-monthly. Grab a cup of coffee and enjoy a bit of quick reading that will leave you more knowledgeable about the instrument you play!

SHEET MUSIC LIBRARY

With our ever-growing collection of sheet music, you have a wide variety of styles and skill levels to choose from. Browse through the sheet music library at your leisure, download and learn whatever song you please! Some of the songs also include their own Interactive Sheet Music Viewer so you may hear how they sound, change the speed, listen to only one hand at a time and catch tricky rhythms.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the resources I previously mentioned, we also have a student forum where you can meet other accordionists, ask questions and continue your learning. Available 24/7, you may access these resources anytime, anywhere at your convenience. With all of this at your fingertips, why wait? Go and learn! Go and play! ■

NEWLY RELEASED COURSES



CORE CURRICULUM SERIES FOR PIANO ACCORDION (LEVEL 2)

This Level 2 course of the Piano Accordion Series follows the Level 1 course already available on AccordionLife.com. It is full of fun pieces with many musical elements for you to learn. You'll also be introduced to a lot of left hand action!



NEVER ON SUNDAY (LEVEL 6)

Bring this fun hit song from the 1960s to life on your own accordion! Step-by-step video instructions with Yev Nosov make it fun and easy.

COMING SOON!



CORE CURRICULUM SERIES FOR PIANO ACCORDION (LEVEL 3)

Level 3 is an exciting course with a variety of pieces for you to learn and play. This course is packed with fun, advanced-sounding pieces, but you also are gaining valuable musical knowledge. This course also includes the bellow shakes, various time signatures, a variety of rhythm patterns and other special effects.



LA PALOMA (LEVEL 4)

Travel back to the sound of old Spain with the lovely Habanera style of *La Paloma* as Yev Nosov teaches it step-by-step. With over a thousand versions, *La Paloma* ranks among the most recorded songs in musical history, right up there with the Beatles song *Yesterday*. With a record like that, *La Paloma* is a perfect addition to your repertoire.



TICO TICO (LEVEL 3)

Composed in 1917 by guitarist Zequinha de Abreu, *Tico Tico* is well known and well loved. Upbeat, fun with Brazilian style -- how can you not enjoy both listening to and playing *Tico Tico*?! Have fun with this Single Song Tutorial. ■

Learn more at AccordionLife.com

WHAT'S YOUR *Learning Style?*



BY JOHANNA WILSON

Visual? Aural? What does all this mean? How do YOU learn best?

Everyone learns differently. If we all were the same, then you most likely wouldn't be reading this article. You've probably heard that there are different types of learners and probably even said, "Oh, I'm a visual learner," or something along those lines. But if we break down the different types of learning styles you may learn something new about yourself. I know I did. There are five main types of learners: visual, logical, aural, verbal and physical.

OPEN YOUR EYES

Visual learning is when ideas, concepts, data and information are remembered through association with pictures or images in your head. If you were this type of learner you would learn better by seeing photos and watching videos than reading a book. (If you are this type of learner, you have free reign to watch all the educational TV shows you want. You have an amazing excuse!)

BE LOGICAL

Logical learners are also called Logical-Mathematical learners. If you're really good at math, this is probably your learning type. Logical learners can recognize patterns, calculate numbers and are very good thinkers. And FUN FACT!!!! People who are good at math are generally pretty good at music. So wear that badge proudly!

GOOD LISTENERS

Aural learners learn through listening. If you're this type of learner, you probably can listen to a song a couple of times on the radio and figure it out pretty quickly on your accordion. These types of people normally do very well in accompanying other musicians last minute. If you learn like this, be prepared to have others wish they could pick up songs as fast as you, but watch out when it comes to sheet music!!

SAY IT LOUD

Verbal learners do really well when people explain things to them. So if you understand someone explaining stuff, like in school, you probably did really well. But learning stuff on your own could be a challenge. If you are a verbal learner then you also love reading and writing, and you love to sing even if you aren't very good at it. (But hey, everyone sings in the shower..... Right?)

HANDS ON

The last type of learner is the physical learner. These learners do best when actually touching something or using their bodies. If you're this type of learner, you have to be able to play something with your fingers on accordion for it to make sense. And you like to be moving when you think or ponder. So instead of sitting in a chair at home, you would rather go on a walk or jog.

WHICH ARE YOU?

Everybody learns differently. There is no right or wrong, better or worse way. And if you were like me and you had no clue what your learning style is, I suggest taking the online test below. Have fun with whatever type of learner you are and wear that badge proudly. Hopefully after you figure out what type of learner you are, you will be able to learn easier. Finding out how you learn best could help in ways beyond understanding music, because the day we stop learning is the day we stop growing.

Want to know which way you learn the best? Take an online test by clicking the button below. ■

[CLICK HERE to find out!](#)



Step One: You must read and play the correct notes from the beginning with the correct fingering. It's not a problem if you want to play in bigger sections as long as you're able to maintain playing the correct notes with the proper

fingering without mistakes. Slowly. No mistakes. Imagine a garden with green grass. When you start walking a particular direction, the grass is pressed down as you walk. When you keep walking that same path, the grass will eventually be packed down creating a solid pathway. In music, we have to follow only one path (same notes/same fingering). When you make mistakes and don't play exact notes with fingering, you create another path, and another path, and another path, but there is no concrete, solid path, and this is where mistakes will happen again and again.

Step Two: Rhythm. Each note must arrive in its specified time. During this step you can solve any other technical problem that arises. Change fingering if necessary. Examine the difficult parts.

“A dream can come true but it's not always simple to realize.”

Step Three: Interpretation. Most importantly at this step, create and fix the bellows. All bellow markings must be assigned and followed exactly. Bellows must start closed for each section of the piece. When this is done, if a mistake is made, you know exactly the bellow position to start in. Then work on phrasing, articulation and other interpretation areas.

Step Four: Now the sequence starts. Play slowly. If

you play in tempo too soon, it only opens the door to create mistakes. Don't play the whole piece. Study only during the day, and then in the evening, just play. The principal goal when you are studying the music is to stop all the time and fix any problems. When you play, it's the contrary. You must find your way through with your heart, with your feeling, not the fingering. You also need motivation, whether it is to prepare for a concert, record for a CD, competition, etc. Dream of something.

“Join a band, have other accordion friends to play with.”

A dream can come true but it's not always simple to realize. You will play more when you have a motivation. Imagine yourself at your concert, hearing the applause of the audience, holding the award from a competition. Reaching your desired goal doesn't always happen. The point is not the arrival but to just do it and enjoy the journey. Don't put too much pressure into the results. Obviously we want results, but we must first enjoy our own music and the journey.

When working to record a CD, concert or competition, create something with your teacher that is unique and personal to your style and personality. Whether it is a nice effect or something very original, it adds value to put creativity in your music that is only for you.

And lastly, don't focus on too many things. Solve only one thing at a time. If you try to solve staccato problems at the same time as the bellows, it can be too many things for the brain. Also celebrate each step. When all the fingering is correct, celebrate! When the bellows are correct and you play them successfully, celebrate!

Join a band, have other accordion friends to play with and be a part of. Never get isolated. Everything is important from playing, composing and competing, to having accordion friends. ■



MUSIC THEORY *with Mel Collyer*

Communicating Music Through Understanding Theory

As human beings we begin to communicate at birth. It is a fundamental function of life and occurs on many levels. Our interest, however, is how we communicate via music.

THE HISTORY OF MUSIC

I look at music theory as a term for the process of communication within music. In many ways I look at the evolution of music communication and see parallels to the way human beings begin to communicate verbally. It is an interesting fact that the sounds of babies (coos and babbles) of all languages sound alike. This includes deaf infants, whose coos and babbles are identical to other children but who later have difficulty with word development.

Anthropologists would suggest that the early development of music around the world occurred in a similar manner using available tools. There always has been use of the vocal cords for chanting, humming and singing. Flutes and drums are also very early instruments. It is believed that music has existed for 55,000 years. Thus just as language predates the written word, music predates music theory.

As stated in the last issue, much of this music was early man's attempt to imitate nature and probably sounded very similar across cultures. However, just as language development occurred and vocalization became different around the globe, music also evolved to have a different quality and sound to reflect geographical differences.

MUSIC THEORY AND CULTURE

For generations, our cultural mythologies were told by word of mouth (oral tradition) until written expression became popular. Early, written works were handwritten and only available to the rich and to the religious who transcribed many of these works. The Guttenberg printing press changed all of that as the written word, which was once exclusive, became available to common folk.

Interestingly, the era of modern music transcriptions followed development as a result of the Catholic Church, which began a system of notation to standardize their system of liturgical chants. Thus, the oral tradition method of teaching music gave way and music theory was born.

I don't want to mislead you by implying the ancients did not study music. Tablets and writings from Mesopotamia, China, Greece and India demonstrate their interests in the theoretical components of music.

For example:

Mesopotamia – described lists of musical intervals and tunings.

China – described theories of practice of tone and pitch.

India – intervals, scales, dissonances, melodic structure, and instruments.

Greece – notation, scales, consonance, dissonance, rhythm and types of music.

However, it wasn't until the late Middle Ages and early renaissance before the structure and form of current music notation (theory) took form. This made it possible for many people to play in an orchestra or other ensemble and play the correct note at the correct time with everyone else. So let's get started with understanding the tools of modern Western music.

THE STAFF

It takes a reference point to write music. In grammar school we used very old paper that I think still had chunks of wood in it, and a pencil. We copied an

alphabet printed on the paper, and later learned to form words from the letters.

In music we also use lines as a reference for writing music. Unlike printing, the lines we use for music are actually a set of five lines held together with a vertical line we call a bar line. We will talk about bar lines later.

This is what a blank music staff looks like:

Higher Pitch



Lower Pitch

In music, the staff makes use of both the lines and spaces for music notation. Thus, a note may be clearly between 2 lines, or a note may have a line go straight through it. The notes at the bottom of the staff are lower in pitch than the notes placed higher on the staff.

Likewise, the spaces are Space 1 - Space 4 starting at the bottom. It is very important to recognize when a note is on a line or in a space, and know that the lower it appears on the staff, the lower the note will sound.



So if you are new to this, you should get some music manuscript paper and practice identifying each line and space by its number. You can find free manuscript paper online by doing an internet search. Or, contact the editor of *Accordion Life Today* to answer questions you may have.

THE TREBLE OR G CLEF AND STAFF:

At this point in time we have not yet identified actual notes. In the English alphabet we use combinations of 26 letters to form words. In the language of music we use seven letters of the alphabet. The letters we use are A B C D E F and G. Their relationship to pitch will be addressed later when we discuss relationships of these sounds.

These letters need a reference point on the staff to direct us to a starting point. In much of music we use the treble clef for this purpose. Most of the music written for higher-sounding notes is written on this staff, hence the term treble. This clef points to the first G above Middle C. It looks like:



Can you look at this and know where G is located? Look at the spiral around Line 2 (not what looks like the tail of a cat below the staff) and that is G. Both the staff and the clef tell us where the notes are. Since we only use seven letters (A-G), we must go up to A to start again, and Space 1 (below G) must be F if we follow the alphabetical sequence.

So, for all of you who are new to this, take out your music manuscript paper, or draw five parallel lines on plain paper. As an exercise, draw a treble clef, wrapping the spiral around the second line. Repeat it for as long as it takes to feel satisfied with the appearance. It helps to start at the top and go downward, slightly angled to right below Line 1, and curl and finish with a large dot. Then, curve to the right at the top and curve back at Line 4, and make almost a circular spiral with the bottom on Line 1. Finish with the spiral wrapped around Line 2.

As stated, G is identified by the treble clef as Line 2. Thus the next space must be A followed by B, C, D, E and F, alternating lines and spaces. Below G is F, and lower still is E. This is demonstrated below. As you can see, the spaces spell out the word FACE. Some people use mnemonics to remember the lines. The mnemonics vary and are shown below:

A musical staff with a treble clef. Five notes are placed on the staff: E (Space 1), G (Line 2), B (Space 3), D (Line 4), and F (Space 5). Above the staff, the letters F, A, C, and E are written in red, corresponding to the spaces between the notes. Below the staff, the letters E, G, B, D, and F are written in blue, corresponding to the notes. Underneath these letters are two sets of mnemonics: "Every Good Boy Does Fine" and "Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge".

F A C E

E G B D F

Every Good Boy Does Fine

OR

Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge

By using manuscript paper, draw random circle notes on lines and spaces, then go back and write the names of the notes beneath them. Try to do this by memory of how the lines and spaces are named. Then, compare with the guides to see how you have done.

Modern common music notation is made possible by using staves (plural for staff) to identify a specific note and then extrapolating the remaining notes. In this case we have used the treble (or G) clef.

NEXT TIME

In the next issue of *Accordion Life Today*, we will discuss identification of lower notes of the bass (or F) clef and see how the two link together to form the grand staff with the use of ledger lines. We also will introduce another floating staff and its relationship mostly to vocal arrangements. Keep practicing note identification and drawing the treble clef, and enjoy. ■

The Wanderlust's Kitchen

with Beverly Smick



Chocolate Lamingtons

Down-under Delicious!

ONE OF MY FAVORITE memories of Australia is discovering these luscious little square desserts. Traditionally, they are made with a yellow sponge cake, dipped in chocolate icing and rolled in grated coconut. My version doubles down on the chocolate, using chocolate cake squares instead of the yellow sponge cake. Either way, they are down-under delightful!

CAKE:	1/4 tsp. salt	ICING:	1/2 c. milk
1 c. all-purpose flour	3 eggs	4 c. powdered sugar	2 c. grated coconut
1/4 c. baking cocoa	1/3 c. water	1/3 c. baking cocoa	
1 tsp. baking powder	1 tsp. vanilla	1 Tbl. butter, melted	

Cake: Heat oven to 350° F. Line an 8" x8" baking pan with greased waxed paper.

Combine flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt, and sift twice. In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs at high speed for two minutes; slowly add sugar and continue beating another two minutes. Turn mixer to low, and add water and vanilla; blend well. Gradually add the dry ingredients; beat until smooth. Pour into pan, and bake for 30-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack 10 minutes, remove from pan and peel off waxed paper. Cool thoroughly; wrap cake in plastic wrap and freeze before icing.

Icing: Combine all ingredients, except coconut, in a microwave-safe bowl; blend well. Microwave on high for 30 seconds, stir and cook another 30 seconds.

Assembly: Trim crust from edges of frozen cake, and cut into 16 equal squares. Dip each square in icing, removing excess with a table knife and immediately roll in the coconut to cover. Transfer to a wire rack until set.

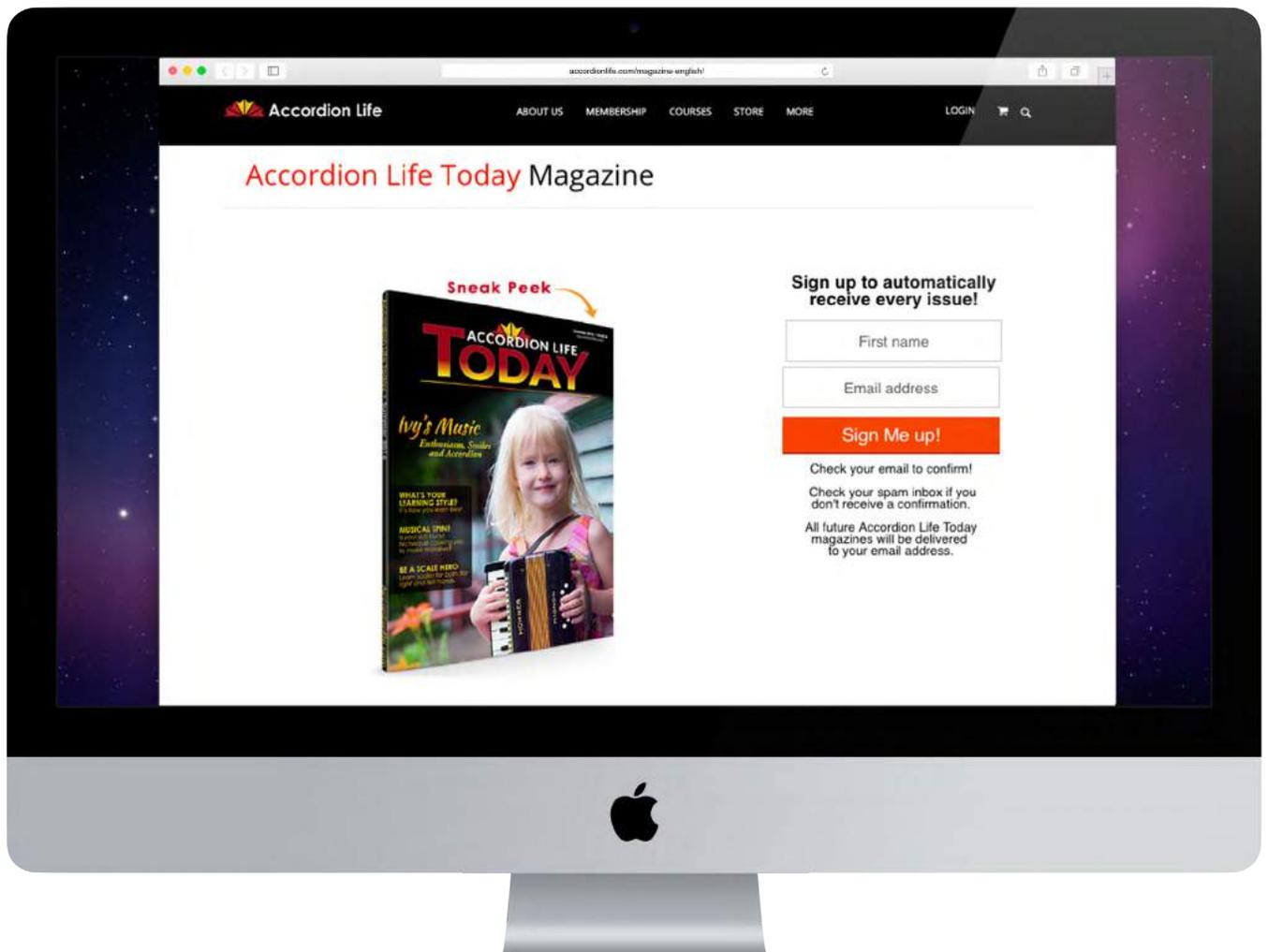
Enjoy! ■



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