

## Chapter 8

### The Piano Accordion as it should be used in Ensemble work (for dancing)

The Piano-Accordion, when played artistically, is an invaluable asset to the Modern Dance Band. One cannot speak too highly with regard to its immense rhythmic value in the playing of Fox-Trots, and in the performance of Tangos, especially it is just the correct instrument to create the desired atmosphere.

The usual commercial orchestration unfortunately does not include a special part for the Piano-Accordion, but after a little practice on the method of adjustment of the Piano part on which I am about to discourse, the student will find but little difficulty in reading from the Piano part at sight.

Modern Dance Music is, generally speaking, written in very simple harmony, and the student will rarely, if ever, happen upon any chord which he cannot conveniently analyse and play on the Piano-Accordion.

If, at any time, he is in doubt as to the nature of the structure of any chord, a little reference to the Chord Chart in the preceding chapter should suffice to enlighten him.

The laborious and totally unnecessary method of picking out a melody and its harmony, note by note, should be abandoned and replaced by the more efficient and musicianly one of studying the harmonic structure or structures in each bar. By that, I mean to visualise each bar, not as a series of single notes, but as the series of chords from which the single notes are derived.

Examples:—

(KEY F MINOR)

① PIANO

In the above example, the first bar is based on the Common Chord of F minor and its inversions and the second bar is based on the Common Chord of B $\flat$  minor.

(KEY A $\flat$ )

② PIANO

The first bar of the above example is based on the Common Chord of A $\flat$  major and the second bar on the chord of the Dominant Seventh of G $\flat$ , or D $\flat$  Seventh as it would be called in connection with the Piano-Accordeon.

(KEY F)

③ PIANO

In Example ③:-

- The first bar is based on the Common Chord of F major
- ” second ” ” ” ” Chord of C dominant 7th
- ” third ” ” ” ” Chord of F dominant 7th
- ” fourth ” ” ” ” Common Chord of B $\flat$

(KEY A)

④ PIANO

In Example ④:-

- Bar ① { The first half is based on the Common Chord of A major }  
 ” second ” ” ” ” Chord of E dominant 7th
- Bar ② { The first half is based on the Chord of A dominant 7th }  
 ” second ” ” ” ” Common Chord of D major

(KEY E)

⑤ PIANO

In Example ⑤:-

- Bar ① { The first three quaver beats are based on the Common Chord of E major }  
 { The fourth quaver beat is based on the Chord of E diminished 7th }
- Bar ② { The first three quaver beats are based on the Common Chord of B minor }  
 { The fourth quaver beat is based on the Chord of E dominant 7th }
- Bar ③ { The first three quaver beats are based on the Common Chord of A major }  
 { The fourth quaver beat is based on the Chord of B dominant 7th }

If the student follows this study of chord analysis he will find how simple it is to adjust any piano part to suit the Piano Accordion and at the same time obtain the accurate chordal effects in the Bass Accompaniment.

He will also learn to read and memorise music twice as quickly and accurately as the student who pictures music as a series of single notes.

The Piano Accordion, when used for dance work, is essentially a rhythm instrument and the student should rarely deviate from the method of developing a steady rhythmic foundation on the Bass Keyboard, and of leaving all embellishments to the Right Hand.

# The Tango

On studying the orchestral piano part of any Tango, the student will observe the consistency of the chords in the Left Hand accompaniment. It is obvious, therefore, that he will experience little difficulty with the Left Hand—but, although Tangos seldom present any great technical difficulty, they nevertheless demand that skilful treatment and delicatessa, so characteristic of the true musician.

There are two distinct types of Tangos—namely, the Argentine and the Parisian, each one bearing its own particular rhythm.

## (a) PARISIAN RHYTHM



## (b) ARGENTINE RHYTHM



(a) In the playing of the Parisian Tango, an even four-in-the-bar rhythm should be, generally speaking, maintained throughout, the only permissible types of variation being found in an equal division by two of any of the four beats such as:—



(b) The Argentine Rhythm should be regarded, more or less, as a two-in-the-bar measure, the accents falling on the usual first and third quavers, e.g.,



Permissible Types of variation are:—



Both rhythms are equally fascinating, but the one which is principally used at present is the Parisian Rhythm.

The question of how to embellish or arrange the piano part in order to procure effectiveness on the Piano Accordion is a matter of very considerable importance. The student must safeguard himself against monotony of repetition and endeavour to instil in his audience that insatiable desire for more which is, in itself, ample reward for any trouble he is likely to take with regard to arrangement of the piano part provided for his use.

He must also try to develop any gift he has of extemporisation and avoid doubling on the melody with any other instrument in the orchestra, excepting, of course, on rare occasions, when ensemble in unison is desirable.

The first type of embellishment which I propose to illustrate is based on little scale and arpeggio passages. (See example A.)

The student should practise this embellishment slowly at first and increase the tempo gradually when he feels comfortable in its execution. The tempo for the present day Tango is approximately 28 to 30 Bars per minute (M.M.  $\text{♩} = 56$  to 60)

The student should also pay particular attention to the phrasing and endeavour to play those notes marked "staccato" as short as possible.

This type of variation is effective, neat, and unobtrusive if played *mf* only, and can be used with any other instrument taking melody. The octave coupler can be used *ad lib.* but the movement should first be practised with the coupler in the OFF position. The bellows should be functioned freely and easily.

A useful embellishment and an excellent study on repeated notes is found in Example B.

The student should watch the accents, phrasing and fingering. The counter-melody in the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Bars should be played legato. Octave coupler should be used.

He should also note the movement of the bellows in this example. The first phrase is commenced with the bellows in a closed position and inflated sharply on each beat in the first bar to obtain the accents. They should be deflated in the second bar and inflated in the third in a similar fashion.

EXAMPLE C is another study on repeated notes. The fingering shown should be strictly adhered to. The semibreves in bars 5, 6, 7 and 8 should be sustained with the thumb. Bellows should be moved freely and easily and coupler used *ad lib.*

# TANGO

## Ex. A

PIANO

ACCORDION

The musical score is written for Piano and Accordion in 2/4 time, key of D major. It consists of three systems of music. The Piano part is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and features a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Accordion part is also written in a grand staff and plays a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics. The score concludes with a double bar line and dynamic markings.

Dynamic markings include *f*, *p*, *M*, and *S*. The score concludes with a double bar line and dynamic markings *f* and *p*.

# LE FADO (TANGO)

Ex. B

PIANO

ACCORDION

Inflate M Deflate

Inflate S M M M

S S M

Respectfully dedicated to Mr. Jay Whidden

# FIFINETTE (TANGO MILONGA)

GEORGE SCOTT-WOOD

Con spirito

First system of musical notation. Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Dynamics include *ff min.*, *min.*, *S*, and *min.*. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated.

Second system of musical notation. Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Dynamics include *M mf a tempo*, *f mezzo-staccato*, *ff min.*, *min.*, *mf*, and *M*. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated.

Third system of musical notation. Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Dynamics include *S fz*, *Bassi Soli*, *pp affettuoso*, and *M*. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated. A dotted line above the staff indicates a repeat.

Fourth system of musical notation. Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Dynamics include *M*, *M*, *S*, and *S*. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated.

Fifth system of musical notation. Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Dynamics include *M*, *M*, *S*, *S*, and *M*. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated.

8 *passionato*

*f min.* *ff min.* *fz M* *pp espressivo S* *S sfz* to Coda

*amoroso e cantabile*

*mf min.* *M* *M* *min.*

*passionato*

*passionato S* *f* *M* *S* *ff M*

*come prima*

*mf min.* *M* *M* *min.*

*molto espressivo* *pp*

*molto espressivo pp* *M* *M* *S S* *M f* *D.S.* *M* *sfz > p* *M S* *Fine*



# TANGO

## Ex. C

PIANO

ACCORDION

The first system of music features a piano part on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and an accordion part on a grand staff. The piano part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. It contains several measures of music with accents and dynamic markings such as *sfz* and *mf*. The accordion part consists of two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef and contains complex rhythmic patterns with fingerings (e.g., 3 2 1 8 2 1 8 2 1) and articulation like *min.* and *mf*; the lower staff is in bass clef and provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with notes and rests.

The second system continues the piano and accordion parts. The piano part maintains the same key signature and time signature, with further melodic development. The accordion part continues with its characteristic rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs, with dynamic markings like *min.* and *mf*.

The third system concludes the piece. The piano part features a final melodic phrase with a fermata. The accordion part continues with its rhythmic accompaniment, ending with a final chord and a fermata. The system includes various fingerings and articulation marks throughout.