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Accordion Miscellany

As when driving an Isetta makes it seem like there are Isettas everywhere you look, when there's an accordion in your band, accordion lore squeezes you from every direction. My band has two members, and half of them play the accordion. Here are some often peculiar quotes about one of the world's most colorful instruments...

From ACCORDION by Robert Service:

Oh I know you're cheap and vulgar, you're an instrumental crime.
In drawing-rooms you haven't got a show.
You're a musical abortion, you're the voice of grit and grime,
You're the spokesman of the lowly and the low.
You're a democratic devil, you're the darling of the mob;
You're a wheezy, breezy blasted bit of glee.
You're the headache of the high-bow, you're the horror of the snob,
but you're worth your weight in ruddy gold to me.

The Felice Brothers infuse their heart break narratives with the accordion and those lucky enough to have caught them at Local 506 their last time through may have been brought to tears by James Felice's earth moving accordion work on "Goddamn You, Jim". -- *Secret Carrboro Ninja Patrol, Nov 24, 2009*

WASHINGTON -- Henry Kulbaski, a uniformed Secret Service agent who played the accordion on the South Lawn for President John F. Kennedy and ordered an errant aircraft shot down over the White House in 1974, died of cancer June 17 at Geisinger Hospital in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He was 74. -- *Washington Post, July 16, 2007*

What I have discovered for myself is that the accordion can breathe, and that is an incredible experience. Everything vanishes, and what is left is the breath of the machine. -- *Salvatore Sciarrino*

My dad rode his fixed wheel bicycle 400 miles across Missouri in 1930 with his 120 base Excelcior accordion on his back. -- *Lynas from Upper West Side; Soundcheck, WNYC*

Some of the top stressful life moments include: Death of a spouse/family member; Divorce; Moving; Marriage; Illness; Jail... The list goes on, but I would like to rewrite the list with the addition of: Traveling by plane with your accordion. -- *Miss Natasha Enquist*

"I used to walk in our seminary garden..." I tell her. "The squeak of an accordion and a song from a far-off tavern would come on the wind, or a troika with bells would race past the seminary fence, and that was already quite enough for a sense of happiness suddenly to fill not only my breast, but even my stomach, legs, arms... I'd listen to the accordion or to the fading sound of the bells, and

imagine myself a doctor and paint pictures--one better than the other." -- *A Boring Story by Anton Checkov*

Russell Brooks noted: "The accordion has found its way

into a new type of dance combination; this being the popular four-piece cocktail lounge outfit, now being used by the very finest spots around the country." -- *Squeeze This!: A Cultural History of the Accordion in America By Marion Jacobson*

I'm going to keep squeezing this thing until nobody calls anymore. -- *Myron Floren*

I believe "faking it" is one of the most valuable things I ever learned. I owe it all to years of accordion lessons. -- *Cheri Thurston*

But yes, that piano begs the evocation of a "loungy" feel, those strong and soulful vocals conjure a "folk" feeling, and the quaint whir and chirp of that confounding accordion often stirs that whole cobblestone-set-busker-hinting adjective of "old world." -- *Jeff Milo, reviewing Dark Dark Dark for Tiny Mix Tapes; www.tinymixtapes.com*

I was constantly making up music; playing mouth organs, accordions, piano, anything I could lay my hands on as a kid. -- *John Lennon*

I'm going to parasail on that boat and play a medly of Elvis's hits to commemorate the 20th anniversary of his passing - I'm going to get close to the King. -- *Accordion Joe, "the world's only performing accordion Elvis"*

I think it's a laugh claiming a piano accordion drowns out all the other instruments in a session. You want to try hearing yourself play it when you've got a Galician gaïta in the room. -- *Celtic Rambler, via The Session, thesession.org*

Piersanti of Chicago featured in a 1919 catalog an accordion that had such a collection of slides switches, reeds, and tremolos, that they had to put a leg on it, also if you please, a motor inside the bellows to help the player. -- *J.M. Elcoate, Accordion World, May 1949*

As far as instrument maintenance goes, living in Australia is a nightmare for an accordionist -- *Cathie Travers, www.cathietravers.com*

The 1910 census of Harrison County, Texas, shows [Leadbelly], listed as "Hudy," living next door to his parents with his first wife, Aletha "Lethe" Henderson. Seventeen at the time, she had been 15 when married two years earlier. It was there that Ledbetter received his first instrument, an accordion, from his uncle Terrell. -- *Wikipedia.*

Below, Leadbelly on accordion.

