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ing the period 1860–1960; a detailed, labeled diagram of a chabrette; an illustrated catalog of instruments and artifacts presented in the 1999 exhibition; a catalog of chabrettes in other collections, public and private; a bibliography; and a discography. The many illustrations—including color photographs of instruments and historic photographs of players, makers, and collectors—greatly enhance the text and make the book worth studying even for those whose French is limited. This volume not only reports on the state of research on the chabrette today, it also evokes the passion that inspires the authors of the articles. When seven authors write about the same thing, there cannot help but be some repetitions, but these actually help the reader to better understand the morphology of this extremely complex instrument and the efforts that have been made to document its role through the centuries of its existence in central France.

Carmelle Bégin
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Philip F. Gura and James F. Bollman. *America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999. xvi, 303 pp.: 97 color plates, 156 black-and-white figures. ISBN: 0-8078-2484-4. \$45.00 (cloth).

This splendid book—written by Philip Gura, Professor of English and American Studies at the University of North Carolina, in collaboration with James Bollman, the highly knowledgeable dealer and collector of banjos and banjo-related ephemera who lives near Boston, Massachusetts—is a landmark publication.

Designed by Richard Hendel, typeset by Eric Brooks, and printed on high quality paper, with a deluxe binding and more than 250 illustrations—almost forty percent of them full-color plates—by Donald Eaton, Fred Stipe, and Peter Szego, the book in and of itself is a genuine tribute to the high level of care and attention lavished upon its production by the University of North Carolina Press. Beyond that, however, it is, as Dale Cockrell at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University in Nashville calls it, a “groundbreaking book.”

Philip Gura, a cultural historian with a particular interest in American studies, music history, and nineteenth-century popular culture, first received recognition for his pioneering work when AMIS awarded him the Frances Densmore Prize in 1996 for his article “Manufacturing Guitars

for the American Parlor: James Ashborn's Walcottville, Connecticut, Factory, 1851–56" (*Journal of the American Antiquarian Society* 104/1 [1994]: 117–156). That article was based on Ashborn's accounting journal of the period, then owned by Bollman, and detailed the relationship in the early 1850s between Ashborn and New York dealers, such as William Hall & Sons. The positive attention given to the article led to Gura's decision to write a more wide-ranging study of the banjo in nineteenth-century America.

Just as jazz is considered to be a uniquely American contribution to the world of music, the banjo, with African roots, is a uniquely American instrument. As such, much has been written about it, beginning in the nineteenth century. One of the more important recent studies is *That Half-Barbaric Twang: The Banjo in American Popular Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 1991) by Karen Linn. She termed her study "an interpretation of the changing and conflicting images of a musical instrument as found in the national, commercial culture of the United States." For her, "the essence [of a musical instrument] lies in the meanings the culture has assigned to it," and she views the data of instrument construction, decoration, and performance practices "as signs whose interpretation depends upon an understanding of the changing life of these signs within American culture" (p. xi).

At the other end of the spectrum is the world of traditional musicologists, many of whom study the history of musical styles seemingly oblivious to what can be learned from the instruments for which the music was written. Alternatively, there are those who study the instruments themselves, but only as objects to be measured and documented, far removed from any cultural context.

The emerging field of American studies, on the other hand, is interdisciplinary by nature. Despite the relatively recent coinage of the phrase "American popular culture" to categorize the taste and intelligence of the people at large in contemporary America, the country was already "awash in popular music," to use Gura's phrase (p. 1), by the mid-1850s. Certainly when we consider the waves of "unwashed masses" who filled railroad cars headed to the Midwest and the Great Plains after the Civil War, we see that their desire for upward mobility and the achievement of middle-class gentility was manifested in the myriad of musical activities that were so central to the times, whether they were brass bands, parlor songs accompanied by piano or reed organ, or the banjo clubs and mandolin orchestras that were to become so popular.

The Civil War years marked a watershed in American life, not the least of which was a basic shift, in large measure, from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, industrial economy. It was the growing ability of the northern states to produce goods that led to ultimate victory in what became a war of attrition. After the War, that growing industrial base and the expansion of distribution systems, as the railroads moved westward, meant new challenges and opportunities, as well, for those who made musical instruments during those tumultuous years up to World War I—years that probably saw more dramatic technological changes in a short period of time than what is being witnessed today with the so-called “information revolution.”

It is this aspect that Gura seeks to develop in his study, not just tracing changes in the banjo as an instrument, but showing the interaction between changing musical taste and changes in the way the banjo was produced and marketed. To do this he has drawn not only on an incomparable collection of banjos but also on extensive documentary evidence. His success in pulling together this kind of material is what makes the book a landmark publication. One hopes that it will serve as a model that others soon will follow.

Perfection is hard to achieve, of course. With its wealth of visual images (almost as many graphics as there are pages in the book), including patents, advertising materials, lithographed sheet music covers, period photographs, and gorgeous color photos of objects, primarily from the Bollman Collection—along with copious end notes that beg to be explored—it becomes difficult to focus on the continuity of the narrative. Self-discipline is the only way to cope with having so much put on one's plate all at the same time.

Finally, with the many treasures of the Bollman Collection readily available, it is easy to understand how other significant resources might have been overlooked. Gura speaks, for instance, of how S. S. Stewart, the Philadelphia banjo manufacturer, “provides a case study of how the business of American music moved from the artisan to the entrepreneur” (p. 7). Indeed, Stewart's career provides a compelling illustration.

Another fascinating case study, however—one to document the relationship between entrepreneurs like Stewart and the players/teachers who worked directly with potential buyers—could be compiled from the Canning Collection of banjos and related archival materials at America's Shrine to Music Museum, part of the museum's extensive collections of instruments built in America or imported by American distributors. The

banjos were once owned by James Scribner Canning (born in Brookville, Pennsylvania, in 1880) who, at the age of nine, began to study classical banjo with the famous teacher of the day, Albert Baur, of Brookville and New York. Baur is cited by Gura on numerous occasions, but reference is always made to the "reminiscences" that appeared in S. S. Stewart's *Banjo and Guitar Journal*, a marketing tool published by the Philadelphia company. The Canning Collection, however, includes not only a beautiful little piccolo banjo by a formidable Stewart competitor, Fairbanks & Cole of Boston, owned by Baur himself, but also original music arrangements still in manuscript, printed music, photographs, banjo journals, and other memorabilia, including Baur's personal scrapbook. Just one more treasure trove still waiting to be explored!

In the meantime, kudos to Philip Gura and James Bollman!

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Martha Novak Clinkscale. *Makers of the Piano, Volume 2: 1820–1860. Drawings by John R. Watson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. xviii, 487 pp.: 7 black-and-white line drawings. ISBN: 0-19-8166257. \$130.00 (cloth).*

Like its companion, *Makers of the Piano, Volume 1: 1700–1820* (Oxford, 1993), this is not the sort of book you sit down and read through. You dip into it to find descriptions of pianos still existing that came from the factories of Broadwood or Pleyel, the workshops of Joseph Hisky or Johann Joseph Promberger. Because one does not *read* such a book, this reviewer will not claim or pretend to have scanned every page.

The two volumes together embody the enormous undertaking of listing and, if possible, describing every existing piano and every piano maker everywhere in the world from 1700 to 1860. Though this volume covers only one-third the number of years handled in the first volume, it is about one-third longer than the first. That tells us immediately how explosive was the growth of the piano industry during those years; to be sure, the frail earlier pianos doubtless have not survived in the same proportions as the larger later ones. Professor Clinkscale provides a useful narrative of the industry in her introduction, discussing the shift from the craft workshop, with apprentices and journeymen, to the large fac-