

# Pietro Frosini



## THE WIZARD OF THE ACCORDION

**Gunnar M. Ohlander**

**Lars Ek**

## Cover text

*The photo is signed and there is a message on the back of it that says – “To my College Chum Torchia Otello with compliments from Frosini January 1, 1914 Kansas City Missouri.”*

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# Preface

Gunnar M. Ohlander, Des Moines, IOWA, born September 5, 1925 in Alfta, Hälsingland, Sweden, has for many years collected information about accordion players around the world. Especially Pietro Frosini's life and music became the subject of Gunnar's interest early on, which contributed to his accumulation of information, pictures, recordings, press clippings and more about Frosini, which today is completely unique. Gunnar visited me in Stockholm in 1981 and was one of the people who inspired me to start the Frosini Society in Sweden in 1985 (100 years since the birth of Frosini.) As an honorary member of FS, Gunnar was a strong profile, supporting the Frosini Society's work and always had time to answer letters from accordion players around the world. Gunnar passed away on June 21, 1988. His collected material on Pietro Frosini resulted in a carefully executed biography. At Gunnar Ohlanders death, his entire unique collection was donated to the undersigned, which in 1989 invented the



*Picture text: Gunnar M. Ohlander, Des Moines, IOWA, USA*

collection in Des Moines. In the collection I found among other things. 45,000 unplayed “78 rpm records”, audio tapes, thousands of music sheet, pictures, posters from all the accordionists in the world. We packed everything in two large containers for further transport to Sweden via Canada to Gothenburg. In 2001, the Frosini Society launched the website [www.frosinisociety.org](http://www.frosinisociety.org) where parts of the collection are now on view. It took me two years and two scanners before everything finally came into its place on the internet. Today, the Frosini Society has 1,300 registered members from 66 countries. We are many who appreciate Frosini’s classical musical works for the accordion music.

*Lars Ek*

*Åstorp 2020*

# The Wizard of the accordion

Pietro L. Giuffrida was born on August 9, 1885 in the province of Mascalucia in Sicily. He became known as “FROSINI”, the wizard of the accordion, the greatest accordionist who ever lived, the most sought-after accordion teacher and one of the most well-known composer of original music of there time.

It is difficult to determine whether Pietro Frosini’s fame is based on his fine compositions, his brilliant recordings or his masterful interpretations.

His father, Michael Angelo Giuffrida, was a poor farmer who could hardly support his family, which we know consisted of two sons, Pietro and Natale, as well as his daughter Rosa. However, he had a hobby that came to influence the young Pietro – he played the accordion.

In 1887, when Pietro was only two years old, the family moved to the city of Catania. At age 3 he got measles, which for a time made him blind. The vision eventually came back, but for all time the vision remained impaired and he had to wear very strong glasses and keep the text close to his eyes as he read.

As a four-year-old he started playing, but only on a toy accordion. A very simple diatonic accordion with eleven keys in the treble and four basses. He did not really learn to play the accordion until 1893, as an eight-year-old, and then on his father’s buttonaccordion with a Norwegian system and two lines of melody base.

With the help of his father, it wasn’t long before the very musical Pietro handled the accordion in a masterful way. He learned excerpts from operas, overtures (The troubadour, Aida, La Traviata, Carmen and others), as well as folk dances, polka, waltzes, all by heart. He also learned to play children’s songs and became very popular in the area. He was often allowed to play at parties for both children and adults.

As mentioned above, Pietro’s parents were very poor and could not afford any musical education for him, so when his father felt that he had no more to teach, Pietro began to study at the city’s conservatory with the help of scholarships. Because he was left-handed, he could not play string instruments and some woodwind instruments, so he chose to play the cornet. However, he also received pianolessons and was for some time an organist in the city church.

Accordions were not allowed at the conservatory during that time. Harmonics and composition were also on his schedule as well as piano and various orchestral instruments. The cornet was Pietro's favorite among the instruments, but he could not forget the accordion.

He studied at the conservatory for six years. In 1898 he became a student of the well-known opera composer Francisco Paolo Frontini. As a cornet player and as a composer he received several awards. As a teenager, he composed a series of interludes, overtures and marches. All of this laid the foundation for his later compositions, such as his three rhapsodies. Already in his hometown he was regarded as a great musical talent and soon became well known outside the city limits.

There is a lot of contradictory information about Frosini's early years, up to 1905. We will reproduce some of this here, while we will include others later.

In 1902, Frosini received a scholarship from Milan's famous music conservatory. However, his period of study there only lasted six months, after which he took up a position as a Cornetist in the English Navy, which was then located in Malta. The probable reason for discontinuing his studies after such a short time was that he was not allowed to play accordion at Milan conservatories either. His parents were very upset, and his father blamed him for not taking advantage of this brilliant opportunity. Perhaps this was the reason why he took up employment in the English Navy. One can imagine that the English had great pleasure in hearing him play. Pietro's involvement in Malta lasted two and a half years.

Another version of the above reads as follows:

"It wasn't long before he had an opportunity to demonstrate what he thought about musical conservatism and snobbery. The opportunity came in the form of an offer of a scholarship at the Royal Music Conservatory in Milan. Pietro said: 'No thanks', as soon as he found out that the scholarship was not applicable to studies in the accordion. His rejection of this cause led to indignation and confusion and was a moral with far-reaching consequences for the accordion movement throughout the world."

Frosini came to the United States in 1905 and it is not clear how he ended up there. One version is that his contract happened to expire when the boat was in San Francisco. He followed the disgrace and stayed there. According to another version, he simply left the boat in San Francisco. Another statement states that he intended to stay in Malta all his life, but

was discovered by American talent scouts: After listening to Frosini, they got him to sign a gold-edged contract, which showed that he had finally received a recognition as an accordionists. According to a fourth opinion, a vaudeville agent heard him play the overture to “The Poet and the Farmer”, immediately appointed himself as Frosini’s manager and took him to San Francisco, where he immediately made great success.

At this time, he also changed his name to Pietro Frosini, and he became best known as FROSINI, without first name. Why did Pietro Giuffrida change his name to FROSINI? We will probably never get an answer to that question, but there are a couple of possible explanations.

One of his teachers at the conservatory in Catania was the well-known Francesco Frontini and since Frosini greatly appreciated his teacher, he can, in honor of him, have taken his name and changed it a little.

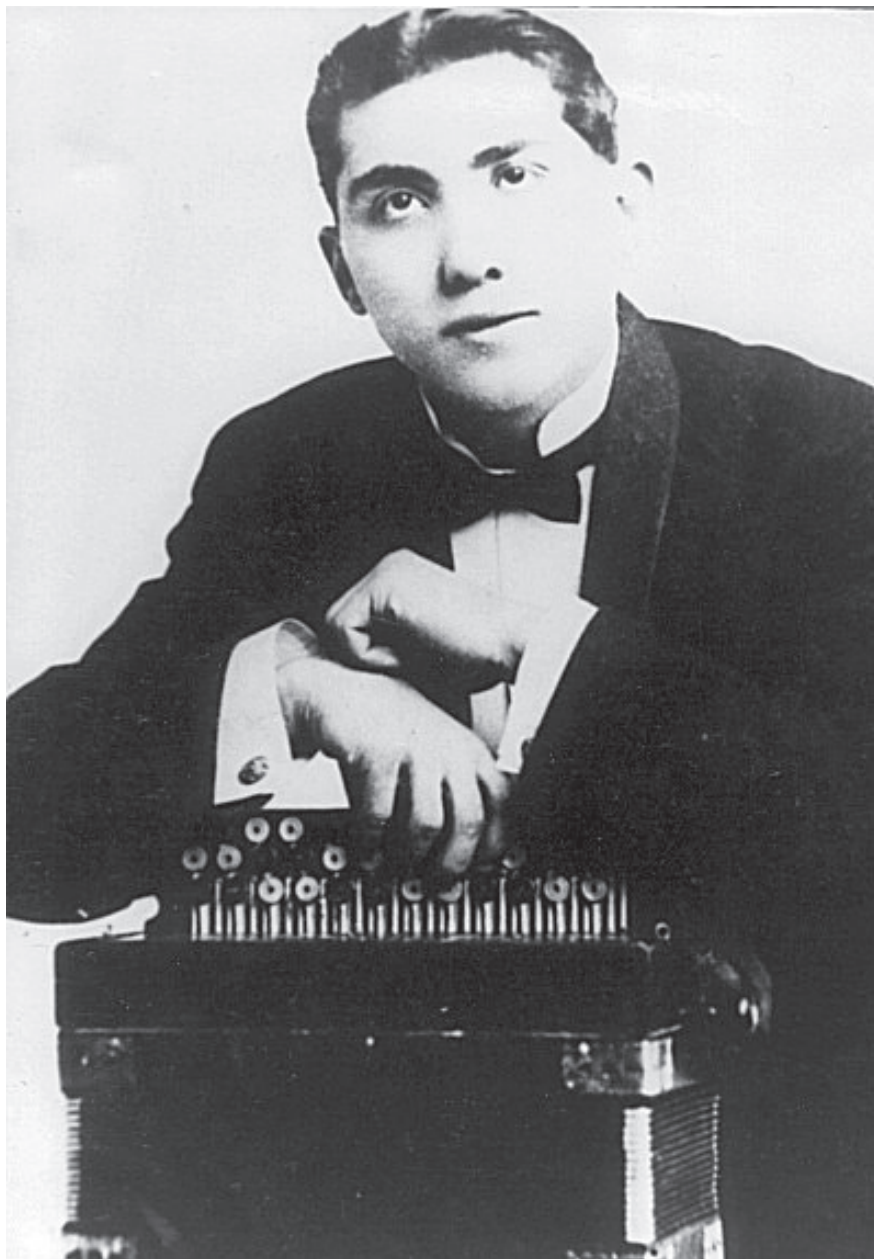
We also know that Gioacchino Rossini was one of Frosini’s favorite composers and in order to emulate his name he only had to add “F” in the beginning.

Worth noting is that he became known as FROSINI and his first name was rarely mentioned. As you know, another well-known Italian accordionist, active during the same time as Frosini, called himself “PIETRO”, although his full name was Pietro Deiro. If Frosini had followed his example and left out his last name, it would have been a complete mess!

As an Italian, Frosini owned the first American-made accordion. When he came to the United States, he contacted an Italian immigrant whose name he brought from Italy. The name was V. Bernandoni and he had an accordion workshop in Philadelphia. Frosini noted that the Italian-built accordion at Bernandoni was not as good as his own old instrument. Frosini discussed the difference between the Italian accordions used in the United States and the accordion he had himself and after days and nights work, Frosini showed a drawing the way he wanted it. After a few months, his new accordion was complete. This was the very first accordion built in the United States and the year was 1906.

According to another source, this would have proceeded as follows:

Frosini had introduced the accordion as a vaudeville instrument in Fresno, California in 1905. At that time, it was common for a soloist to be accompanied by an orchestra. However, Frosini considered his accordion to be overwhelmed by the accompaniment and soon began to play alone. Once in New Orleans, the rain caused flooding in the room where Fros-



*Pietro Frosini 1906*



ini had his accordion and the base mechanism rusted. He had to ask the orchestra to accompany him again, because despite trying, he could not find a single accordion repairman in the entire South. Not until he came to Philadelphia, where he did find a small accordion workshop on First Avenue and 117th Street, where V. Bernandoni was located. He quickly repaired Frosini's instrument, so it became useful again and undertook to build a new one for \$20. This was 1908. The accordion was chromatic and weighed about five kilos. It had 37 buttons in the treble and 33 melody basses in two rows. The wood was mostly maple with beautiful frames along the edges. The reeds were made by a man named Cannestraci and had steel tongs on brass plates. Height was 33 cm, depth 17 cm and width 22 cm. It was two-reeds, straight with two unison reeds, in other words not octave tuning and without register.

The accordion had no straps and when Frosini performed in front of the audience he had his foot on a 45 cm pallet to be able to have the accordion on his knee and hold it to his chin.

Although the accordion was so small, it had a bearing tone that made it easy to hear in theaters such as the Chicago Hippodrome with 4000 seats.

A short time later, Frosini met Guido Deiro. Frosini believed that Guido made great efforts to create a popular style of play that earned the accordion a place in the hearts of the American audience, having previously been considered a novelty. The stormy applause Guido Deiro always received with tunes like "Alexander's Ragtime Band", influenced Frosini in the direction that he changed his program.

Instead of a pervasive classical repertoire with pieces such as "The Poet and the Peasant", "Miserere and the Troubadour", he began with an overture and continued with a potpourri of Irish folk tunes and songs such as "Alexander's Ragtime band", "Fiddle Up", "Everybody's Doing It", etc.

The accordion had previously been regarded as an instrument for lighter music, such as Irish jigs, waltzes and polkas, suitable only for simple melodies. Through Frosini's advanced playing methods and a repertoire of overtures and other classical pieces, which had never been played on accordion before, he helped to increase the reputation of the accordion in class with other instruments. He traveled around and played at vaudeville theaters throughout the United States and eventually ended up at the Keith-Orpheum Circuit in New York. Frosini was now one of the highest

paid accordion players in the vaudeville world and he became more and more famous.

Within the vaudeville, Frosini became famous as “The Wizard of the Accordion.” He also mixed his own compositions with other pieces in his program. One of his first compositions released in the United States was “The Chalice”, copyright 1908 by Maurice Shapiro, founder of the publisher Shapiro Bernstein & Co. Edgar Selden wrote text for the melody. It was arranged for piano, not for accordion. The melody was a sentimental semi-religious ballad, which was about the Monterey mission station.

## The Chalice

Written by  
EDGAR SELDEN

Composed by  
PIETRO FROSINI

Larghetto<sup>Bell</sup>

The musical score is written for piano. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Larghetto' and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The lyrics are: 'One sun-kissed morn, Just as dawn, O'er the li - ly fields was'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords. There are also some handwritten annotations in the score, including 'Bell' and 'C'.

Bell

One sun-kissed morn, Just as dawn, O'er the li - ly fields was

During this period, he also wrote two other tunes, “Just Because” with text by Stevens, published by Huntzinger and “The Rose and the butterfly.” “Just Because” was recorded by Earl Fullers New York Orchestra in 1921 on Edison Disc 50 824 and on Olympic 15 116. Van Eps.

# Just Because

Words and Music by  
VERNON T. STEVENS  
P. FROSINI



Specialty Four's recording was released on Cardinal 2043, Medallion 8318 and Emerson 10 415, "The Rose and the Butterfly", which was released for piano solo and "The Chalice" has probably never been recorded on record.

April 1909, Frosini made his first recording. On Edison Wax Cylinder 103, he recorded "Wedding of the Winds" by John T. Hall. This his very first recording was described as "a recording by a new Edison artist, known from the stage as FROSINI, The Wizard of the Accordion. The number being played is a favorite of lovers of good music. It is considered one of John T. Hall's best compositions and is very well arranged for accordion solo."

His second recording for Edison, "The Overture to the Poet and the Peasant", came out in August 1909. The catalog read: "Frosini is a phenomenon. The way he plays the overture to 'The Poet and the Peasant' on our recording will cause many to change his perception of the musical possibilities of the accordion."

Already in October 1909 came his third recording, Edison No. 223: "Seneca Waltz."

"An unaccompanied accordion solo and one of Mr. Frosini's own compositions. It is played in concert style. It is no exaggeration to say that this artist has no competitor on the vaudeville stage, where in the commercial he is always called 'Frosini, the Wizard of the Accordion'."

"Seneca Waltz" is probably one of his rarer recordings, almost impossible to get hold of today.

In February 1910, no. 347, "Amoureuse Waltz" was published by Rudolphe Berger.

The comment was: "In Frosini's magical hands, the accordion seems to develop a to date unknown quality of tone that is missing when the instrument is played by less talented artists."

Eventually, Frosini became a role model for daycare schools around the world in how accordion would be played, although few came to Frosini's skill. Here we want to put in a contradictory article from the journal "Accordion World", May 1940.

"It was Guido (Deiro) who made Frosini change from button to piano accordion, because he had brought with him from Italy a very fine copy of the same size as a modern accordion. Bernandoni's company had meanwhile been taken over by the Galizzi brothers and they built Frosini's first piano accordion! It had 41 keys in the treble and two extra bass rows, giving 66 buttons instead of 33 with melody bass system. The accordion had 4 reeds instead of two and was equipped with shoulder straps of the same type as Guido Deiro had introduced."

Frosini was an accomplished pianist and composed several pieces for the instrument, but he never had any piano accordion. Of course, one can wonder why Frosini did not switch to piano accordion, as this was the accordion in front of others at this time, after the Deiro brothers had introduced it at the vaudeville theaters in the United States. However, he had "Finto-Cromo" systems on some of his accordions, i.e. false piano keys inside the chromatic keys, with the white piano keys as the third row (on some models as the fourth row) and the black piano keys usually imitations that were not playable.

After Frosini's last acoustic recording for Victor in December 1910, it was until 1913, before his name reappeared in any American record label.

In 1911 he traveled to England for a six-week engagement. He made a lot of recordings while he was in England. Some of these were not released until 1914. His recordings were made for several different record companies in England, such as The Winner and Edison Bell, Velvet Face (a more exclusive brand from Edison Bell), Beka (an original German company), Coliseum (also German), etc. His English involvement included concerts at "Empire" at Leicester Square. While in England he also gave a so-called "command performance" to King George V, a very great honor for the Italian-born American.

In July 1913, Frosini appeared again in Edison Record Co.'s catalog with Amberol cylinder no. 1861: "Wedding of the Winds" and in October

no. 2107 with the well-known "Amoureuse Waltz." However, these were releases in "indestructible" form (celluloid cylinders) of his original recordings on wax cylinders.

Back in the United States, the accordion master began a new series of recordings in 1914. In February 1915, Edison's catalog Blue Amberol no. 2531 appeared with Frosini's own composition "Echoes from the Movies" and the artist's name was given as P.J. Frosini. This recording must have been made shortly before the fatal fire at the Edison factory in January 1915, after which all new cylinders were transferred from the Diamonds Disc. Contrary to what many record collectors believe, no Edison discs were made from the cylinder matrices.

At the same time, Diamond Disc's supplement no. 25 recorded no. 502 15 "Through the Park March" (Through the Park), another of Frosini's compositions and "Echoes from the Movies." This recording appeared ten years later in the book "Live Music", a compilation of the 300 most popular Edison records.

The presentation in the catalog is interesting: "According to a music writer and critic (in Encyclopedia Britannica), the tone of the accordion is stiff and without beauty, although the best instruments in the hands of the most skilled performers do not completely lack artistic qualities", – A really negative judgment! This critic has probably never heard Frosini play, because in that case he would have had to change his perception of the artistic qualities of the accordion. "The Wizard of the Accordion" has P.J. Frosini was called and those lucky enough to have heard him play surely agree with the creator of this title. This potpourri that Frosini so aptly calls Cinema Echo, is arranged by himself. He is a composer and skilled organizer, besides being an accordion virtuoso. The potpourri starts with a few beats from Mendelssohn's wedding march.

Each of Frosini's Diamond Disc's was also on the cylinder but some of his previous recordings on the cylinder were removed from the disc list.



*Pietro Frosini with his accordion*

# John Reuther

We have mentioned before that Frosini, or “Froz” as he was called by his friends, did not have many students. He was very demanding and never took any beginners. The following episode is told by one of his students, John Reuther.

J.R. grew up in New Zealand. As a child, he had the opportunity to hear two of Frosini’s recordings on an Edison phonograph of a neighbor. He was so inspired by these recordings that he took every opportunity to listen to them and these two, “The Weddings of the Winds” as well as “The Poet and the Peasant” remained in his head and he wished that one day he would get an accordion to play them on.

Eventually J.R. moved to New York and started taking accordion lessons for Frank Umbriacco, but he didn’t think he was making any progress. One day when John visited the World of Music Co, he happened to see a composition by Frosini, the man he had heard many years before on the phonograph rolls in New Zealand. He mentioned this to the shop owner who said: “The man standing over there is Frosini.”

John had a very interesting conversation with Frosini in the shop and was very much surprised at how much “the little man” knew about music. A few weeks later he decided to take lessons for Frosini and went to the studio in their home. He told Frosini that he did not think he was developing on the accordion, despite two years of study and asked if he could take lessons for him. Frosini replied that he only accepted advanced students, not beginners.

He also said to John:

1. Learn the notes in major and minor up to A (3 cross signs) and Ass (4 b marks).
2. You must also be able to play these chords as an arpeggio up and down in three octaves, with first two then three and finally four notes on each beat.
3. In the same way, play the major scales up to the gridlines above and below the score system. He said that before John could master these important details, he could not imagine teaching him. He also said John could get piano books at the Schirmer Store, where he could learn scales





*John Reuther – the man behind “The Uniform Keyboard”*



and arpeggios. After that, it wasn't long before John Reuther had learned enough for Frosini to adopt him as a student.

Frosini's three rhapsodies were composed in reverse order with "Rhapsody #1 in D minor" as the last. His "Rhapsody #2 in C minor" is probably the most famous of the three. He often played his classic compositions differently than the published versions. The publishers often believed that the compositions were too long and must be shortened, or were too difficult to play and must be made easier. A good example of this is his "Rhapsody #2 in C minor", where much of Frosini's own interpretation in WOR Radio is missing in that publication. Another example is "Overture in C" or "Sonata in C", as it says in the original notes.

Frosini was very careful that the music should be written exactly as he wanted it to be played. For example, he sat down with Lloyd La Vaux and worked for six hours with an arrangement on Fritz Kreisler's "Caprice Viennois" before he was satisfied.

Up to now, we have discussed about Frosini's musical life. But who was the man Frosini?

He was a short man, just over 150 cm long. His health was poor, and his eyesight was very low. He was a product of his time and the society he lived in. He was very talented and musical throughout his body. He was also a knowledgeable professional. His harmonization's attracted a musical ear and he was deeply rooted in the Italian romantic tradition. His tunes never lacked anything and never sounded false or unnatural, although one could often foresee how they would sound.

One thing we must never forget is that Frosini was undoubtedly the greatest blessing of the accordion and a father figure for the development of an instrument on which one could play more than just folk songs and dances. Frosini's music was well ahead of its time when you consider that it was entirely suitable for playing accordion. Unfortunately, the accordion was not yet accepted in the musical world among artists and composers. An instrument that could not create a world of harmony that extended beyond the major, minor, septic and diminished septic chords simply did not fit in the way other musicians thought – and still think. Frosini created an original literature for the accordion with musical rules and substance.

Admittedly, Frosini's instruments had a bass keyboard with considerably greater scope than the Stradella system of the time and with much greater harmonic and structural possibilities. But – and this is not a con-



*Pietro Frosini and his friend John Reuther*

descension but an acknowledgment of the facts – he practically did not use these possibilities at all in his compositions.

Frosini did this on purpose, he didn't handle any benefit with a music that could not be played by many people. He was very interested in popularizing the accordion and could aim somewhere in between the very simple and such tunes that he did not think had any market. This depends on this customer's playing more difficult pieces on the accordion of the time.

It is difficult to categorize. "Big" and "Nothing" are just words and very little in the artist world is either Top or Bottom. I think anyway, to make a scale from those who have had once and succeeded with the least possible artistic value (big popular stars from Al Jolson to today's rock stars) to those who create real art outside to get some recognition at all, one must probably place Frosini among the less fortunate. He was not really like Schubert, who created some of the most beautiful music in history and as he died completely unknown, but Frosini probably belong, one must

say, to the same category. Although he sought glory and fame, his material rewards became more modest than those of lesser talent and ability.

However, we must remember that Frosini was influenced by his way of thinking: “America is not a place for the music of grief”, “What sells is good” and millions of other such concepts which are often regarded as truths but which have very little philosophical value. Frosini also had a outlook that made it easy for him to continue the same track. He was not politically interested. When dealing with businessmen and politicians, he instinctively felt that he was going to fall short, so he never wasted any time with them. His background was also such that his most important goal was to support himself. He was never troubled by global or philosophical issues; they did not occupy any of his time. He devoted all his energy to completing his work with the accordion.

A third factor was that his wife Alfride (who was called “Fossie”) devoted his life to protecting him from anything that could question anything he did or thought. The result was a man who did unusually much for a young instrument – the accordion – which was in great need of music written for it, but unfortunately Frosini did not do much for his own part, neither materially nor when it came to realizing the scope of his own innate ability.

Frosini chose to follow a path which meant that he gave a musical direction to an instrument that was not accepted and that was a tremendous gain for the accordion. That he never doubted himself, because his wife protected him from everyone who disagreed with him, also led him to never question anything. Although this atmosphere led to a productive business, it deprived him of the opportunity to develop.

Frosini was born with an outstanding talent, you cannot deny. What he learned in his youth about music gave him both the technique and the skill to write down the compositional ideas he had. As a very young man – probably under thirty – he composed in such a way and with such certainty that it would take the world of accordion many years before they came close to accepting his greatness. But the constant struggle to popularize the musical language he had learned from previous composers and then transferred to his accordion world, resulted in him ignoring what had to do with his own musical development. If you look at what he wrote in the 1920s – and even earlier – and compare with what he wrote thirty years later, you will find a marginal difference. Nothing happened in his



*Pietro Frosini 1937*

life that made him question whether his musical foundations were as stable as he had thought. If you compare with Beethoven and listen to his first symphony and then to the last string quartets, you see a very talented young man who develops into an artistic creator who was confronted with the great questions of humanity and expressed them in his works. If you listen to Verdi's "Traviata", and then to "Otello" or "Falstaff", you also see a young man, blessed with a heavenly ability to create wonderful melodies and fifty or sixty years later an old man who creates fewer melodies, but who thinks deeper and is aware of a number of questions about life that the young Verdi never thought of. Both Verdi and Beethoven grew as artists. Frosini was so absorbed by his role that perhaps the only artist who had anything to do with the development of the young instrument accordion, that he did not have time to develop himself.

Composition went virtually without effort for Frosini. The tunes flowed. On the subway home from the radiostation WOR he could say to himself: "Today I will write a pasodoble."

If someone visited him that night, he could say, "Here's a new pasodoble I wrote today." Composing and living was easy for Frosini. He had a talent for melodies. It was a very short step between the idea of a melody and the finished composition. He was an accomplished professional. He knew how to smoothly move from one chord to another. From his time at the vaudeville theaters he knew what made the audience nod to the music and what made them yawn and go out. When he worked out a melody input pulse for a finished composition, he always thought of this. The structure (the magnificent and at the same time devilish feature that drives a composer to work for months on four beats and at the same time hate himself for not being able to find the tones that express exactly what he wants to say), the whole concept of composers such as Debussy spent his life trying to understand, Frosini didn't even touch as much as a raindrop. For him life was simple ... life was positive ... a melody was sad or happy. If lucky, it received a rhythmic accompaniment. If it was sad it got the long chord. If he was unsure whether the tune was one or the other, it didn't last long, because uncertainty had no place in Frosini's life.

He never questioned the path he went, and he did not question his own worth. He never departed from his course.

As an adult, Frosini never got rich, but never poor. His valuable assets (two knowledgeable hands and a solid musicality) never encountered any





*Pietro Frosini, 1925*

dramatic events that could destroy them. Even before 1910 he had success in the vaudeville. The life of an established vaudeville artist was basically safe and secure. Not all were high-paying stars, but Frosini usually had two or three performances a day and two or three-year contracts. The first threat to this safe existence came only when the vaudeville began to die out. It was a difficult period for Frosini, but it did not last long. It coincided with the depression in the early 1930s, but Frosini managed to get a permanent position on the radio station WOR and shortly thereafter he settled in New York. The work on the radio station was his safety until his death. Frosini never interfered with things that could direct his attention outside the protected world in which he lived.

Although two world wars took place during his lifetime, he was never emotionally involved in any of them. His life was not always as successful as he would have liked, but everything went his way, as nothing ever happened that shook the foundations of existence.

Frosini did not make much money on his recordings. Some people have a kind of ability to turn everything they do into money. Frosini always hoped to be able to do this, but he did not have that ability. It is doubtful if he ever received royalties on his records. He probably received a fee of between \$25 and \$50 for each recording.

Guido Deiro earned much more than Frosini during the vaudeville period, but also lost it all and spent his final years in deep poverty. Pietro Deiro invested his money. He had just the ability that Frosini lacked, to turn everything into money. With several musically quite insignificant compositions, Deiro managed to start a publishing house that went well for a long time. When Frosini tried to do the same thing (with "Gauchos on Parade" and some other compositions, which he himself published and printed), nothing happened, and it all ended with him giving up the copyright to an established publisher.

As I mentioned before, Frosini was very short and lean in physique. He was breathing heavily and if you sat next to him as he played, you could hear every breath. Frosini smoked, but was not a chain smoker, except when he was very nervous about something. Otherwise, he was concerned about his health and used to go to bed early. The periods of illness were related to the malaria he had suffered during his time in the English Navy.

Frosini's taste was very simple. He and his wife almost never went out,

except possibly when they visited some good friend or accompanied someone and fished. They had an old car, but it was mostly in the garage in the basement of their house.

“Fossie” could not drive and although Frosini had a driver’s license, his vision was so poor that he avoided driving. When it came to clothes, he wore an old tuxedo and very few suits. In recent years he did not care much about how he was dressed.

Frosini valued popularity very highly: Achieving the fame and success of the audience. When he once gave Pietro Deiro a signed photo, he wrote something like this: “To my friend Pietro Deiro – you dragged the accordion into every city in America, put it in the knees of people and made them enjoy it!” Now it illustrates to the fact that Frosini had no high thoughts about Pietro Deiro. He felt that Deiro practically lacked musical education, that he only played very simple pieces and never composed anything original (except for four beats by “Chanticleer”, but it was a mere coincidence). But when Frosini was to sign the photograph, he thought he should write something friendly, so he threw all artistic misgivings overboard and jumped to another topic: “I write something about how successful Pietro was.” And success was extremely important to Frosini. He did not have patience with things that the audience did not like. He was no Buddha. Leaving his kingdom and his throne to find the meaning of life was nothing for Frosini.





*Pietro Frosini, Pietro Deirto, Charles Magnante*



*Charles Nunzio and Pietro Frosini on stage in New York*



*Pietro Frosini Dean of American Accordionists*



*Mrs. Frosini, Alfride Larsen, 1939*

## Frosini's family

Frosini settled in New York and in 1913 he sent for his family from Italy. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, Frosini was not accepted by the army because of his physical weakness. Instead, he entertained soldiers in military camps and hospitals throughout the United States.

Frosini got married at a ripe age. In 1916, danish immigrant, Alfride Larsen, played a one-act model, "The New Model" at the Palace Theater, Hartford, Connecticut. Pietro Frosini came there as an accordion star to perform at the theater. On the first evening they were presented to each other and after meeting her, Frosini invited the whole company to champagne. They married four years later in Philadelphia. The marriage lasted until Alfrides death on June 13, 1949.

The Frosini couple bought a house in Beach Hurst on Long Island in 1924. In 1940 they moved to another house in Sunnyside on Long Island. After acquiring their own house, Frosini began teaching accordion, but the students became few as he thought it was rather uninteresting. He also became very busy when he was engaged by John Gambling at WOR Radio Station in New York, a program that lasted until his last illness. When his many engagements became too tiring, with all the journeys back and forth, Pietro and Alfride moved back to New York City.

The program at WOR was made up of Vincent Sorey's little ensemble in a morning entertainment five days a week with John Gambling as host. Frosini joined the program for 17 years and played solo every week. Some of these were recorded by Frosini's best friend John Reuther and are now privately owned.

Frosini had a brother Natale, or Nat as he was called, and a sister Rosa. Rosa was his favorite and something that facilitated their friendship was that Fossie liked her too. Rosa was not in herself difficult to come to terms with. She idolized her brother Pietro and it fit well with Fossie's view of her role in Frosini's life. Fossie considered himself a fortress with the task of fighting back anyone and everything that could break down Frosini's self-confidence or imply that he did not achieve the material success he should have achieved. She examined everyone under a microscope and if she discovered someone whose affection for Frosini was not genuine or who had reasons other than appreciation for wanting to see him, she



kicked them out. She never lacked motivation for not wanting to see them in the house. Unfortunately, one of the victims of this was Pietro's brother Nat. Nat was, in fact, a wonderful person. But Fossie came to hate Nat's wife and this was because of an insignificant incident. When they once visited, Frosini picked up his accordion – which he often did when someone greeted – and started playing the prelude to “Tristan and Isolde.”



*Mr. & Mrs. Ivor Peterson and Mr. & Mrs. Pietro Frosini, New York, 1935*

Nat's wife said something like "Who wants to hear this intellectual music (High-brow music)." That was enough for Fossie. Every time she heard someone mention NAT, she always had a comment, for example, "I don't want to hear about these awful people ... you know what they are ... uneducated, that's what they are."

But the result of Fossie so violently frightening everyone that she thought could hurt Frosini's self-confidence, caused all three (Frosini, Fossie and Chubby, a small black dwarf tip) to meet very few people. For a long time, it is alleged that the only people welcome in the house were Rosa, Billy (a Japanese gardener) and good friend Ivor Peterson, who lived just a few blocks away.

Frosini's brother Nat, worked for Acme and Excelsior Accordions, which later also owned Pancordion. Nat specializes in basic mechanisms.

Frosini was not unhappy. His health was wavering, as we know. At times he was almost unconscious. It happened that he became resentful when other less talented people always seemed to succeed better than him. But Fossie did a lot to give his life stability. Frosini did not mind taking the subway to the radio station at five in the morning. When he felt healthy, he immediately began working on new compositions after returning home from the broadcast. After saving for many years and living in dreary apartments they could buy a small house on Long Island. Outside the basement where Frosini had his study room was also a small garden. He liked to cook. However, Frosini also had periods of depression and outbursts of anger over life's injustices. Sometimes he was also very impatient with Fossie. But she instinctively understood him, and they were so happy together that it was inevitable that he would die so soon after her.

His vision was, as mentioned earlier, very poor. In one eye he had no vision at all and in the other he was gravely nearsighted. As he read, he almost held the paper against his nose. It must have been a nightmare for him to walk through the metro stations. At home he experienced harmony and well-being in his basement room, where Fossie never cleaned his desk, which he stood and wrote at (it resembled an old pulpit with ink horns). Up in the house he always had a hard time finding things.

## Head over heels in love

*Alfride and Pietro Frosini's romance (from the magazine The Accordionist):*

On March 9, 1937, Signor and Signora Pietro Frosini celebrated their seventeenth wedding anniversary. The journalist, who always welcomes a reason to visit this adorable couple, seized the opportunity to personally express his best wishes. The journalist found the Frosini's in deep admiration for a bird they had just bought, whose birdsong were mixed with other canaries they have long had as pets.

While the Frosini couple admired the bird, the writer directed his admiration to Mrs. Frosini, which on this day looked particularly breathtaking. A compliment to her beauty elicited a smile on Frosini's lips, while nodding in agreement.

"Isn't she wonderful?" He asked. But it was no question, rather an exclamation.

Here the romance blossomed – after seventeen years! "Where did you meet?" The Accordionist wanted to know.

Mrs. Frosini replied: "It was at the Palace Theater in Hartford, Connecticut. I played model in a play called 'The New Model.' Bobby (that was her nickname on Frosini) came there as an accordion star to play at the same theater. We were introduced to each other the same evening – and after meeting me he invited the whole ensemble to champagne. We both fell head over heels in love, but I had my theater engagements and Bobby had his – so we didn't get married until four years later. I had intended to continue working at the theater, but my husband needed me, so it became my life's task – to take care of Frosini.

He taught me how to cook spaghetti and other favorite dishes and now I cook better than he does!" The latter she said with triumph in her voice and her husband agreed.

Frosini produced an album full of photographs by Alfride Larsen – that was his wife's maiden name. She was born in Copenhagen – a descendant of the Vikings. There were pictures of her as a model, in theater roles and as a member of Helen Gardner's Pictures Players company based in Tappan, New York. (Mrs. Gardner has now withdrawn from the theater and is one of the couple's best friends).

Frosini has a wonderful home in Beechhurst, Long Island, which is a haven for the maestro between his vaudeville commitment. He enjoyed staying in his garden, where he had over a thousand rose bushes. But his numerous radio engagements entail far too strenuous trips, which is why the house was rented out. Now they live on one floor on elegant East 57th Street.

The writer chose a few photos for this romantic story and then asked, “What do you consider the highlight of your career?”

The former theater star no doubt replied: “The highlight of my life was when I met Frosini!”

“And my biggest moment was when I met Alfride!” Replied Frosini.

When you hear the Master on accordion on the radio and be enthralled by his wonderful playing, don’t forget to donate and pay tribute to the delightful Scandinavian princess, Alfride Larsen who has weaved his dreams into his life patterns in such a way to see that, after all these years, he is still head over heels in love!

It was an old tradition among the early accordion pioneers that the artist and his reeds would be inseparable, even if they were given a new instrument.

Frosini also believed in this and followed the tradition. From his first Giuliani accordion (about 1912 shortly after Mr. Giuliani, Giulio’s father, came to America) to his first Excelsior (in the early 1930s), Frosini had the same reeds. He absolutely wanted Pancotti to mount his Giuliani reeds in the Excelsior accordion. Ironically, this tradition sometimes led to great disappointments. When Frosini tried his new Excelsior, his comment was: “Lord God, you have ruined my Giuliani reeds!” These temporary disappointments nevertheless occurred more and more and the general perception among the old masters was that an accordion player and his reeds developed together. The parts took up all the knowledge and wisdom that the player acquired over the years and they should therefore never be separated.



*Pietro Frosini on stage, 1940*



# A concert with Frosini

John Reuther, who was Frosini's closest friend, expressed the following (with a twinkle in his eye): "As usual, everyone was waiting with excitement for Frosini and the applause stormed at conferences announcing his entrance. Then came a big accordion with a little man!"

Frosini was always afraid of microphones, but also wanted to present his numbers himself. He spoke English with a very strong Italian break, but this was not at all uncommon, as different immigrant groups usually lived in different neighborhoods with Italians in one area, Germans in another, etc. After each song the applause was overwhelming, and he always had to play several extra numbers. Often, critics were present at Frosini's concerts.

It must be remembered that the accordion had become very popular in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, but had recently been introduced to the more well-known concert venues and the newspaper's music critics were consequently very curious about the accordion artists and the music they performed.

Lloyd la Vaux was one of the few who performed with Frosini in concert. He told me about one of these concerts like this: "Marcello Roviato and I were the only students that Frosini asked for assistance when it was time for his concert at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. He was very ill and weak at that time. I went home to Frosini and we were followed to the concert. Marcello met us at Carnegie Hall.

A while before the concert started (and it started late because Frosini was so weak that it took me time to talk to him and help him with his clothes, before we left home) I remember Frosini asked me to play first and third rhapsody as well as 'Italian Fantasy', all of which were on the program, instead of him. I also remember that Marcello played 'Britannia' and something else that was also on the program, but I can't remember what it was. The concert venue was packed when we arrived.

I've been thinking a lot this evening. The concert was reviewed in several newspapers. I especially remember it in the New York Herald Tribune. It was a wonderful review to the extent that the critic gave Frosini fine praise both as a musician and composer (and the gods should know that he did not receive many recognition during his lifetime).

It was also mentioned that he was very ill, and that Marcello and I



*"Grand Master", Pietro Frosini*

helped so that the audience could hear all the numbers advertised in the program. It was especially beneficial to read this by a New York reviewer. Because they are always looking to tear the artists apart.”

Here’s the review from the New York Herald Tribune, March 23, 1942, that Lloyd La Vaux said:

## Frosini in accordion concert

Accordionist Pietro Frosini performed at a concert last night at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall, despite a serious indisposition that had threatened to cancel the concert earlier in the day. He played his own works as well as arrangements by Wagner, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Kreisler, Gort and Mendelssohn. Two of his students, Lloyd La Vaux and Marcello Rovaro, assisted him during the second part of the concert, when it became clear that Mr. Frosini could not implement the entire program. They played great and Mr. Frosini, who was heard in Kreisler’s “Caprice Viennois”, gave a try to his fine sense of the instrument. (R.).

## The following interview we quote from Accordion World, november 1938:

Recently we had the opportunity to investigate Frosini in Sunnyside, Long Island. Frosini, very characteristic of him, stood and worked with music at his custom-built pulpit in his study. However, he stopped immediately and welcomed us with typical Italian hospitality. We expressed our joy that he looked so healthy. “Yes”, said the brilliant accordionist, speaking of health, it is fortunate for me that I have never had to do hard body work. I’ve been supporting myself as a musician since I was 16. “But you didn’t start as an accordion player”, we joked. “Not professionally”, Frosini admitted, “even though I had learned a lot about my father’s instrument before I started at the music conservatory at the age of ten. There I could not play accordion, because at that time it did not have a high musical reputation. I studied there for six years and learned cornet, piano, harmonica, counterpoint and

composition. My first professional job was as the first Cornetist in the English Navy's music orchestra. With them I traveled around the world for four years. Then it happened that my contract expired when we were anchored in San Francisco, California. I decided to stay there and start playing accordion again."

"It was a lucky day for America when you made that decision", we exclaimed, "and it is well-known accordion history that you made instant success in the vaudeville. You toured around the country and performed at the leading theaters for many years, right?" "For nearly 30 years", Frosini said with obvious satisfaction. "Then I withdrew from the tournament and switched to radio performances." "Is there anything else you want to highlight?", we asked. "Yes, you could say that it is my wife's merit that I am so healthy that I can continue my career, because she cares for me so well that I can continue." And Frosini turned with a polite bow to the delightful Mrs. Frosini.



*Pietro Deiro, Pietro Frosini, Charles Nunzio 1949 Gala dinner at the award of the "Accordion Oscar"*

## Hindustan



## Bellow shaking

The art of using the bellows of the accordion to achieve a tremolo effect by Pietro Frosini (from *Accordion World* May 1936).

The principle of bellow shaking on accordion is like the string technique for violin to achieve a tremolo effect. If the bellow shake was performed smoothly and evenly, it is very effective when looking at the appropriate place in the piece of music.

On the string instrument, tremolo read most to express emotional moods called, contempt, heartache and great joy. It can also give the listener the feeling of storms, spring winds, rippling water, sparkling stars and so on. Although such effects cannot be revealed in accordions, bellow shaking is a way to vary the playing.

I am very proud to be the forerunner and author of this unusual way of using the bellows. I used it very effectively for many years in my performances as a kind of artistic trick and often put it in the quick finale to an overture or fantasy. I always got big applause. It was especially popular when I played the replay of a popular tune with bellow shaking instead of variations, while the orchestra in the background played the tune weakly in pizzicato. My bellow shaking became a kind of brand to me and was always a sure success.

I remember a very popular tune called "Hindustan", where my application of bellow shaking was so effective that I had it in the program for over a year before I changed it to another suitable tune.



The note example shows how I have used tremolo in “Hindustan.” As you can see, I played in a high position in the right hand with the chord notes above the melody so that it would not be lost to the audience, who often hummed in the melody when I played. I did the orchestration, on the contrary, put the melody above the chord notes as in the original.

It took some experimentation to get the right balance, but the result was very satisfactory.

I can't exactly explain how I do this bellow shake. It is much easier to demonstrate the trick yourself, if it is now a trick.

Or is it an innate ability? Or what is it?



*Pietro Frosini with his accordion.*



# What makes a First Prize winner?

*By Pietro Frosini (from Accordion World, July 1937)*

“By an enhanced decision by the jury, the first prize goes to ...?”

These decisive words satisfy both the audience and the participants, because knowing that three or four experts have the same opinion, you get the feeling that the decision is right. Which yardstick is used to decide who will win? It can be summarized in the following points:

1. Timing (beat and tempo)
2. Accuracy
3. Interpretation
4. Security

I set timing first, because if the contestant fails at this point, he is knocked out without further ado. Mistakes that reveal a lack of technology affect the other significant factor.

If two or more competitors are equal on these two points, the jury should take into consideration the feeling they put into the playing. It is in such cases that it can sometimes be of different opinion, since an interpretation that appeals to one may not be accepted by the other. This is the opinion of the majority.

The safety of the performance obviously affects all three preceding points. A competitor may be able to make an excellent performance, but the nervousness can cause him to fail both in timing and accuracy and the only feeling that exists is rampage fever!

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We mentioned earlier that Frosini also played the piano very well and he wrote several pieces for that instrument, including a very beautiful composition he called “BELLS”, which he unfortunately never wrote down.

When he first played his “Rhapsody #2 in C minor” on the radio, as usual he introduced the piece himself and then called it “Musical Moments in C Minor.” It was much longer and slightly different from the version published by Alfred Music in 1939. His recording of “Sonata in C Major” also has several parts than that published by Quattrocioche and Alfred Musik CO.





*Pietro Frosini*



*Marcello Roviato, 1980*

When Joseph La Vaux passed away, Frosini wrote an evocative piece of music, called “Elegy”, in his memory. The manuscript was given to La Vaux’s son, Lloyd La Vaux, who played “Elegy” at a concert called “Mournful Thoughts.” Lloyd La Vaux lost the notes during the war. Frosini became a father to Lloyd La Vaux, who called Frosini “my father and teacher.” Lloyd was a frequent visitor to Frosini’s home.

John Reuther, another of the couple’s close friends, often went out fishing with Frosini. John said: “When we went fishing, it happened that Frosini was humming something. So, he took out his sandwich package and started writing some notes on it. It was the beginning of a new composition. I wish I had saved those wrapping papers.”

Frosini’s biggest “hit” was “The Jolly Caballero”, a paso doble he wrote in 1936. Another big “hit” was the variations at “Carnival of Venice”, as in 1934. However, he had arranged the same tune before and recorded it at Edison Diamond Disc, a completely different version from the written music sheet 1934, but still with his incredibly skilled bellows.

DEDICATED TO MY DEAR FRIEND JOE LA VAUX

## Mournful Thoughts

PIETRO FROSINI  
NOV. 21, 1941

# Frosini talks about his composition

An interview with the most prominent composer of accordion music.

Accordionist interviewers were lucky enough to meet P. Frosini in his nice studio on 57th Street in New York when he was free from work. Otherwise, this pioneer and master of accordion and busy man who divides his time between almost daily radio broadcasts, teaching and composing.

The Accordionist explored Frosini's fine accordions with great interest and heard and shared amusing stories from life in the radio studio. Soon, however, the conversation came in music and composing – and it wasn't that strange, because it was only in this subject that the Accordionist had come to interview Mr. Frosini.

"When did you write your first composition?", the Accordionist asked.

"I started to compose when I was ten and a half years – before I could hear what kind of an orchestra was playing. My first composition was a march that I called 'Sweet Memories'." Frosini smiled, as if his young years were really "sweet memories" for him.

"What basic education do you think is necessary to become a composer?"

"Being able to compose is an innate ability, like being able to write poetry, stories or plays, but it can of course be improved through studies in harmonics, counterpoint and instrumentation. A good composer stands out by being able to find innovative tunes and arrange them in an appealing way."

"Is it a talent that can be developed?", The Accordionist wanted to know.

"Yes", replied Frosini, "I think it can, by studying the form and style of well-known composers and trying to understand what they want to say with their compositions."

"Is there something that needs to be constantly studied and practiced?"

"Inspiration is more important than constant practice. Always try to fill your ears, heart and soul with good music that has a real meaning. Sometimes a small part of a conversation with an interesting and intelligent person may be enough to inspire me to a new composition."

“Do you compose a whole paragraph at one time or do you write down short themes from time to time?”

“I can come up with tunes at the most unexpected times and places”, replied the productive composer.

“I always carry a notebook with me and make a draft of the composition. Then I work it out when I have time.”

“How did you do when you composed ‘The Jolly Caballero’,” The Accordionist asked, because this tune is one of the most popular written for accordion.

“Mr. Vincent Sorey asked me one day if I written something new in the lively Spanish style. I replied that I had written boleron ‘The Butterfly’ (La Mariposita), which is quite lively and the waltz ‘Olive Blossoms’.”

“But I would like something fierier”, he said, “a paso doble, for example.”

I replied, “OK, you will have it next week.” So, I went home and put on the accordion. “The Jolly Caballero” flew off my fingers without stopping! Since then, I have written two more paso dobles, “Gauchos on Parade” and “Los Rancheros”.

The Accordionist left the studio with the feeling that if he had the least talent to compose, it would come out after talking to such a stimulating personality as Frosini.





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- V-12142 ITALIAN MAZURKA  
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- V-57 FLORETTE-WALTZ  
COMEN MY LOVE-WALTZ
- V-20 COQUETTE-POLKA  
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*P. F.  
If you can place your  
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# P. FROSINI

ACCORDION SCHOOL

Pietro Frosini  
Modern Accordion School  
44 West 95th St., N.Y.  
Tel. Riverside 9-2741

~~227 EAST 40TH ST.~~

New York, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> 1933

*My Dear Manfred Max*

*I am sending you  
the numbers which you ordered.  
I have not published any  
of the other compositions of  
mine, aside from those which  
are listed on the pamphlet  
I sent you. I have also  
not published any Accordion  
Arrangements - and also  
Accordion Method. But will  
do so in the future and will  
notify you of the same.*

*I write and make special ar-  
rangements of any numbers that  
you wish. I charge \$3.00 a page.  
Thank you for your order  
with kindest regards I remain  
Sincerely yours P. Frosini*

Handwritten letter from Frosini

## Question and answers

The Accordion World Magazine sometimes had articles where Frosini answered questions. Sometimes these articles were called "Hints and Helps" for accordionists! If you have difficulties with any part of the accordion - submit your problem to The Accordion World. They will be answered



by the great accordion artist P. Frosini. Sometimes the article was “Frosini solves your problems.”

Here are some examples of these questions and Frosini’s answers:

*Question:* I would love to hear an artist’s view of the curved keyboard, where the idea is that the forearm should more naturally follow the curved keyboard. I have found that anyone who is used to the straight keyboard has no problems with the curved. On the other hand, the one who once gets used to the curved keyboard get into difficulties when it comes to returning to a conventional straight keyboard.

*Answer:* The curved keyboard has been in the main court but change the new modern accordion to this type. All the leading artists used the straight keyboard, which is a pretty convincing argument. It just seems that it is easier for the right hand to reach the keys on the curved keyboard. In fact, one must extend the hand as far as the straight models.

*Question:* What is the best way to learn how to play prima vista? How can one develop the left-hand technique when it comes to scales, difficult runs and long jumps?

*Answer:* Prima vista reading is an ability that comes through experience and only after a student has gone through a long series of exercises. Although a student can read the notes quickly, he is not quick enough to catch up if he has not reached an advanced stadium. Don’t lose your options if you have difficulty mastering prima vista reading. The best practice is to play and read as much as the ability allows. The same goes for left-hand technology. It is difficult to develop speed, but with stubbornness and patience you can achieve what at first seems impossible.

*Question:* Can you tell me how to play rumba comp accompaniment with bass in treble in a quartet consisting of piano, bass, violin and accordion. I would also like to know what chorus accordion should take in this arrangement.

*Answer:* The rhythm of the rumba is found in the piano notes. The accordion can play the rhythm with both hands with both bass and chords in the left hand and chords without the root in the right hand. This is most effective when the violin has the melody. The accordion should take another chorus. When playing, you perform a simplified rumba comp in your left

hand. I recommend that you listen to some good Spanish orchestras if possible and notice how the accordion is used. There you will get many valuable tips.

*Question:* Can you suggest a way to learn bellow shaking?

*Answer:* It would take several pages to describe the bellow shaking art, because there are countless elements included. A personal demonstration and instruction by an expert are the only way to learn how to show the technology well enough to be able to use it.

*Question:* On the staircase keyboard, I feel it is an effort for right hands to play in the highest octave, which is further down the accordion when playing. When I play the fourth repetition of “Nola” it is just the chromatic passage that I cannot perform due to the uncomfortable position. Can you explain how to hold your hand and arm to eliminate this difficulty?

*Answer:* Probably you have too long straps on the accordion, so it will be too low. It is also conceivable that you have the treble too far to the right. The treble keyboard should be in the middle of the chin, so high that the chin almost rests on the accordion. This does not eliminate the difficulty with the highest octave, but it is of some help. Then try to stretch your hand and hold it in such a position that it is easier to play the difficult passages.

*Question:* Why don't you publish “Flight of the Bumblebee” in The Accordion World?

*Answer:* Later, The Accordion World will try to publish an event on “Flight of the Bumblebee.” It would be as if an acrobat would try to do a double somersault without exercise the turn cartwheels.

“Flight of the Bumblebee” was originally composed by Rimsky-Korsakov for a classical ballet. The manuscript includes more than ten pages, and the “fireworks” that accordion players usually get from the violin vocal for the orchestration of this masterpiece is comparatively only a few beats of the composition in its entirety. No one who just performs such a fragmented and sketchy part of the whole piece can take the honor of playing “Flight of the Bumblebee.”

*Question:* I have learned to play accordion for three years. And that is exactly what is the big problem for me. The pace is not good. I can read notes

in the treble but I'm fooling around with the bass. I have good harmony, and I can play so it sounds good. Which system do you propose to correct my errors?

*Answer:* If you fool around with the bass, you play on the ear. When you study to become a musician, you absolutely must learn to play all the notes as they are written. You need basic knowledge of music, just as you need to learn the alphabet before you start grammar. Bases that "sound good" are like being able to pronounce difficult words, but not being able to spell them or use them properly. The remedy for your problem is to play simple pieces – note by note – until you've stopped cheating. It is better to play "Home, sweet home" correctly than "Hungarian Rhapsody" without form.

*Question:* Can you explain how to perform a glissando on the accordion base?

*Answer:* You never play glissando on the bass. If you think you have heard something similar, it must have been a very quick passage that reads like a glissando. Don't worry about how to play glissando. The most important thing is to get the right chords.

## Several suggestions and ideas from Frosini

*For accordion schools:* The leader of an accordion school should always try to put together an orchestra. It doesn't matter how small the school is – an orchestra can have four members and up, provided each plays its own vocal.

The teacher should be able to arrange pieces himself, there is no such arrangement in the market.

If you want to expand an accordion orchestra, you do not have to add instruments other than bass and drums. The remaining effects account for the accordion.

*Always:* Don't play too strong. This awakens not only dissatisfaction with the audience, but it is also affected by it yourself, because if constantly "blowing" with the accordion, you have an instrument suitable for the dustbin. When huge amounts of air are pushed through the bellows, cracks eventually form in the instrument that no repairman can fix. The parts are very flexible. The assembly is suffocated with too much air and the tongue will eventually break off.

Remember that clear and soft play is always more desirable than strong and bad. All accordion students, no matter what stage they are in, should learn the basics, to be able to read piano notes.

*For organizers:* When choosing works to arrange for accordion, use your judgment to find such pieces that are particularly well suited to the instrument. Avoid compositions written as piano solos. Orchestral pieces often tend to fit better into accordion. If you are a beginner in arranging, it is good if you are familiar with the works of experienced, professional organizers and composers of music especially for accordion.



*The student Charles Nunzio and the teacher Pietro Frosini in his home, 1932*



*1st board of A.A.A., 1938 G-E von Hallberg, Joe Biviano, A. Galla-Rini, Ch. Magnante, Pietro Deiro, Ch Nunzio, Pietro Frosini, Abe Goldman, Sidney Dawson*

# Orchids for my accordion colleagues

*By P. Frosini (1937)*

Thirty-two years ago, I introduced the accordion in America, from a theater scene. At that time, the audience was amazed at something as simple as a chromatic scale. When you hear our leading accordion artists perform today and even those whose excellent accordions you can enjoy on the radio without even knowing their name, you marvel at the development that has taken place in a relatively short time.

I have a feeling that this Music Trades Convention of 1937, which will show the importance of accordion in musical circles, is an opportune moment for me to give my compliments and best wishes to my accordion colleagues.

Primarily, I would like to pay tribute to Pietro, who began his outstandingly successful career in this country just a few years after I started. Pietro's way of playing created a sensation from the beginning, especially among Italians. I never forget when I first heard him play "El Guarany." It was 1914. His recordings on Victor of popular and classic pieces did much to create a lasting popularity for the accordion. Pietro and I have become the best friends in all these years, even though many have tried to make us feel like rivals and induce jealousy between us.

My tribute goes to Guido Deiro, whose artistic ability and "Showmanship" made him the most celebrated favorite in the vaudeville.

I particularly admire Charles Magnante for his impeccable technique and for his orchestral improvisations. He has done a lot to popularize the accordion as an orchestral instrument.

I remember hearing Frank Papile play with Ted Floritas orchestra in Chicago many years ago when the radio started to become so popular. As far as I know, Papile was the first accordion player to play on the radio with an orchestra. Today, he has many admirers and has earned well-deserved recognition for his knowledge.





Another accordionist whose orchestral performances are outstanding is Joe Biviano. But he is not only a prominent orchestral soloist but also a fine all-round artist and musician.

My highest praise goes to Anthony Galla-Rini. This young artist has devoted many years to vaudeville performances and concerts, but I have not until recently had the privileges of privately getting to hear him play. His musicality and fine interpretations of the classics really deserve the highest praise.

Jerome Damonte is another accordion player I had the pleasure of listening to at a private concert and where the music where a real pleasure.

Charles Nunzio, I would like to congratulate him for his fine work for the accordion for many years and for the fact that he was the first to master "bellow shaking" on piano accordion. This tremolo was for many years my speciality and other accordionists seemed to think that it could only be performed on button accordion. Charlie showed that it was possible to

perform on a piano accordion as well and learned to master bellows shaking to perfection. This encouraged others and is now very popular with the younger generation.

Phil Baker deserves not only praise, but also a thank you for introducing accordion to an audience that previously opposed it and has thereby acquired many new accordion admirers.

Among the female accordionist, Gypsy Nina's performances have impressed me as well as Countess Sonia's soulful interpretations.

There are many other accordionists, too many to mention here, all of whom do valuable work. This admiration comes not only from me, but from everyone who is interested in accordion music. The style and ability of many who play on the radio is excellent, although their names are not advertised. I feel that I would like to shake hands with all my colleagues who have done and do a brilliant job of raising accordionists to a level I could never have dreamed of thirty-two years ago. I am pleased to see that these successful artists are not only rewarded with appreciation but also with financial prosperity.

When we talk about the development of the accordion, we really should not forget to express our appreciation to manufacturers, university-applying research and work has led to huge improvements to the instrument. We should also not forget the publishers, especially the pioneers, who invested money in publishing accordion music within which there was no real demand for it.

Above all, I would like to congratulate Accordion World for their great efforts in gathering the opinions of various accordionists and for the encouragement the magazine gives the young accordionists. I admire magazines for showing their neutrality and the diplomatic way in which it treats us accordionists and our differences of opinion.



*Jan Klocek*



*Joe Biviano*



*Charles Magnante*



*Anthony Galla-Rini*





*Accordion World Concert, 1941, John Gart, Charles Nunzio, Andy Arcari, John Gerstner, Pietro Frosini, Pietro Deiro, Mindy Cere.*



*Erik Olsen, 1918*



*Arvid Franzén*



*Louis Iorio*



*Pietro Deiro*



*Continental Ballroom, Newark, New York, 1937 Guest artist Pietro Frosini, (left) Other Charles Nunzio, Josef Fronfrilli, Louis Iorio*

# Notes on musical events with Frosini who participated

## Frosini in Russian

The incomparable P. Frosini, whose fame as an artist and composer is worldwide, is now delighting a huge radio audience every Sunday afternoon with Russian tunes. The program reaches the entire United States and comes from the WABC, Columbia Broadcasting System.

Frosini has transcribed "Songs of Russia" for accordion and his performance is part of an excellent classical program, which also includes a Russian choir and the studio orchestra led by Emil Deutsch. The program is led by Vladimir Heifetz and will continue indefinitely. The response from the listeners has been very enthusiastic and the WABC particularly appreciated a telegram from Sioux City, Iowa with praise for Frosini's playing.

## Frosini as a guest artist

At the Grand International Concert in October 1936 at the Irving Place Theater, New York, P. Frosini performed as a guest artist. His performance of his own "Rhapsody #1" for accordion, "Carnival of Venice" and "Italian Fantasy" received long and enthusiastic applause. He also played the "Pilgrim Choir" from Tannhäuser, which nobody but Frosini can play.

The other artists were Arvid Franzén and Erik Olsen and all were received by storm by the audience, which filled the theater to the last seat.

## Gala performance at the opening of Bob-Jules

The presence of famous accordion players such as Anthony Galla-Rini, P. Frosini, Peter Marconi, Joe Biviano, Johnny Serry with several openings of the new Bob-Jules Accordion Studio on October 31, 1936 for a memora-



ble event. Many guests, who came to congratulate Bob Brodsky and Julius Giulietti to their new company, got to attend a party night with accordion music by the gathered stars.

Galla-Rini opened the program with “The Dance of the Hours”, “Rhapsody in Blue” and other classic songs, which were enthusiastically received. Peter Marconi, known as “King of the Blues”, delighted the audience with a dance number where he accompanied himself on accordion and imitated well-known orchestras.

Outside the program, Frosini, Biviano and Serry were persuaded to participate in the entertainment. Frosini’s masterful play and always equally captivating bellows technique were met with storming applause. So did Bivianos swing music and Serry’s keyboard tunes. Joey Scott, who recently arrived in New York from the West Coast, presented an entertaining interpretation of “Turkey in the Straw” as it was played in Ireland, Russia, Germany and other countries. Jan Klocek, one of Bob-Jule’s teachers, supplemented the line of entertainers this afternoon.

## Frosini receives the city’s keys at a memorable concert

A major event was the international accordion concert held in Worcester, Massachusetts on November 28, 1936 with Pietro Frosini and Arvid Franzén. Their program of classical music was received with the delight of many audiences. An exciting moment comes closest to John S. Sullivan, Mayor of Worcester, handing the city keys to Frosini as an appreciation for his great artistry.

At the end of the program, Frosini and Franzén received oblivious tributes from the music lovers who had listened to their program.

## Frosini in international concert

On November 22, 1936, a Grand International Concert was conducted under the direction of William E. Stein in Fifth Avenue Hall, New York.

Musicians from many countries participated in the program and P. Frosini received a staggering acclaim for his performance of “Carnival of Venice” and “Pilgrims Chorus” from Tannhäuser.

## A concert in Newark filled the Auditorium Frosini brilliant guest performer Peter Marconi popular conferecier.

Astonishing – colossal – gigantic – even Jimmy Durante would miss words to describe Charles Nunzio’s accordion concert that took place in the Continental Auditorium, New Jersey, on May 23, 1937.

A crowded Auditorium echoed with cheers and applause many times during the evening, showing his appreciation of Nunzio, his guest artist P. Frosini and the assistant accordionists Louis Iorio and Joseph Zonfrilli.

Conference Peter Marconi’s fine performance gave him applause. The Nunzio Accordion Band, which initiated the program, honored its author with an engaging performance of “The Accordion World March.”

Both Frosini’s and Nunzio’s solo numbers and even their duets were played brilliantly. Especially worth noting was a duet by Nunzio and Louis Iorio with music from Jerome Kern’s “Theater Boat” and a quartet consisting of Nunzio, Frosini, Iorio and Zonfrilli who played “Gauchos on Parade.” A special mention must also be given to the tango potpourri that Nunzio and Frosini had arranged and performed as a duet. It was a jewel that should not be forgotten. Two members of the audience, who themselves used to being on stage, also received applause: Pietro Deiro and Anthony Galla-Rini!

## Frosini music sheet have new owners

Interesting news for all accordion enthusiasts is that Accordion Music Publishing Co, has purchased the right to four of Frosini's most popular compositions. It is "The World Accordion March" in both solo and orchestral arrangements, "Alfalfa", "Sweepstakes" and "Autumn Breezes" 1937.



*Pietro Frosini*

# Comments in the press

## Creator

A young Italian armed with something that many consider to be a torture instrument – an accordion – came next in the program. Frosini – so called the youngster – accomplishes more on his primitive instrument than several orchestras succeed, namely, to really create music. His performance of the overture to “The Poet and the Peasant” was truly remarkable. It was hard to imagine that not a lot of other instruments participated, but the piercing tone of the accordion couldn’t go wrong. Frosini seems to have a feeling for everything he plays, for his head rocking with the rhythm.

## Bellingham Theatre

Pederewski can play the piano, Yasye can play the violin, Creatore can lead an orchestra, but FROSINI can play ACCORDION. Everyone in the big audience at the Bellingham Theater last night gave their unreserved approval of his masterful performance of the overture to “The Poet and the Peasant.” His technique is wonderful, his tone is round and beautiful, and his interpretation is dignified and masterful.

## Vancouver

One can certainly predict that Frosini will draw large crowds to the opera house this week. He is undoubtedly the best accordion player ever heard in Vancouver, and master of his instrument and a true musician. His first number, “The Poet and the Peasant”, was superbly played and his extra number, a lighter piece, was performed in the same perfect and appealing style. No one should miss this brilliant attraction on the program.

## Frosini in Trenton

Frosini, the accordion pioneer, is truly a master of his instrument. He performed last week at the Trent Theater, Trenton and his performance were an emphatic success.

## Orpheum's pleasant attraction

Frosini, the Italian accordion virtuoso, creates considerable interest in an instrument which, to date, due to its limitations, has not been recognized by those who wish to recognize and fame in the music profession. This young man from distant Italy, performing this week at the Orpheum Theater, was a musical sensation in his home country and has been recognized by contemporary musicians as a miracle when it comes to harmonies on accordion.

## The Accordions “Oscar”

In 1949, the America Accordionist’s Association (AAA) presented a bronze statuette, the Accordion’s “Oscar”, to Frosini with the following inscription: “To Pietro Frosini for outstanding ability and for his efforts in the field of accordion.” It was handed to him at a dinner held in his honor and to which many teachers and musicians from all over the country have come to pay tribute to Pietro Frosini.

The atmosphere was very pleasant and the food superb. Everything was very well arranged by Theresa Costello, hostess for the event, assisted by Pietro Deiro Jr. Pietro Deiro Sr. said in his speech, among other things, that:

“It was a great honor for me that our A. A. A.-president asked me to hand this plaque to my friend Pietro Frosini. I must say that it was very unexpected, but of course I am extremely pleased to be appointed to hand over the award to a man who has so well earned it. The quality and endurance of Pietro Frosini’s work in the accordion’s service can never be emphasized. There is no doubt that everyone here tonight knows with them, that there is no one who has earned this recognition better than this man. To Frosini, I would say that although AAA could have chosen a more welcome person for this task, I personally think this would be unnecessary, since your compositions spoke for themselves and are known and appreciated by accordion players all over the world, who all look up to you. It is for this reason that I sincerely hand over this gift.” To this, Frosini replies: “I cannot express what I have in my heart at this moment, when I have received this gift from A. A. A.’s members. I am not prepared to give a long speech, as even in this happy moment I feel sad and heavy. Many of you who are here know that I lost my wife. She died six weeks ago. She was my devoted companion and a comfort and help to me throughout life. I can only give her my biggest tribute now. I have nothing more to say about the accordion, since Charles Magnante has already spoken about this.”





*Pietro Frosini receives Special Award by Pietro Deiro, 1949*

“I want to thank you once again for the great honor.”

He shakes hands with Pietro Deiro, who kisses him on the cheek and mentions that the plaque he received is only a replacement for the statuette he would receive, but which the engraver had not been able to get ready in time. Frosini then turns to the microphone and says:

“Mr. Deiro tells me that this plaque is only a substitute for what I should have actually received, but to this I would say that if it was also just a toothpick, I would keep it as a treasure in my heart.”

The guests rose after this speech and applauded lively.

The poster, which was later handed over, was a beautiful piece of art and wore the following inscription: “American Accordionist’s Association’s award to Pietro Frosini in recognition of the outstanding efforts and merits he has made for the accordion world. Submitted on July 26, 1949 by members of A. A. A.”



*Governing board members in A.A.A.*





*An aging Pietro Frosini, 1951*

## “Frosini devotes his last powers to the music”

In early 1951 Birgit Kejving, the Swedish accordionist Andrew Walter's wife, did the following interview with Frosini which was published in the journal "Accordion-Journalen." The headline was: "Frosini devotes his last powers to the music."

For twenty years, a string orchestra, whose leader John Gambling, has held together in America. The orchestra mainly plays classical music and they have radio broadcasts every day from 7.15am to 8am. The program is very popular and has millions of listeners. One of the members of the orchestra, which was formed twenty years ago, is Pietro Frosini.

Upon my arrival in America, Frosini was seriously ill and could not play in his daily program. I kept myself updated on Frosini's health condition to be able to visit him as soon as he left the bed. However, this looked dark. Frosini was very poor and his sister who looked after him banned all visits. The time for my departure was approaching and I had not yet met this outstanding composer and musician, which was also mentioned with respect in the most exquisite musical circles in America.

The day before my departure, at last I received the happy message from Frosini that now when he was so restored that he would play in his radio show the following day. It was a program with no audience, but I got a personal invitation, so it went well. Of course I was delighted and despite having a thousand things to control – I would be aboard the boat at ten o'clock – so I did not hesitate for a moment to seize this opportunity, as I understood it would be my only and last chance to hear Frosini in person.

## I didn't believe my eyes

So, I went to WOR, which was the name of the station and it is located at Times Square. When I entered the studio, I saw a small, emaciated and green-pale man and at his feet stood an accordion. He introduced himself as Frosini, and I certainly got a shock. I didn't believe my eyes. Could this

be the man who produces so many wonderful tunes, who plays in such exquisite discs and who every day pleases millions of listeners with his music? He couldn't even lift the accordion in his lap. He has become a permanent fixture, I thought, he sits here because he has done it for many years, and they do not have the heart to dismiss him. He certainly cannot play. But notes were picked up, nothing was repeated, and the program started. If I imagined that Frosini would only mark his participation in the orchestra, I was thoroughly wrong! He played distinct, clear, musical and fine without a single miss. And there were no small things that were played. It was classic stuff, difficult and complicated.

## The music keeps me alive

While Frosini was playing he underwent a change. He was not an old sick and tired man anymore, the whole figure was brought to life, he sat elastic and straight on his chair, his eyes sharpened and seemed full of power and energy. I was so surprised and thought I witnessed a miracle. And it was a miracle indeed. When, after the end of the program, I went ahead and thanked him and asked for an interview, the enchantment was broken. He sank together, much like a balloon with holes in it, all the energy he showed during the program was over and he was so tired that he could hardly speak. I felt great pity for him and wondered if this daily radio broadcast was necessary, which so tainted his weak powers.

"Yes", he replied, "it is the broadcast that keeps me alive. I only live when I play, and I keep this job because it's so easy!"

Easy, was the last thing I would say about what they played, but for Frosini it was obviously that.

"But have you not made much money on your compositions; they are known all over the world?"

"No, I'm a poor man. My publishers have probably earned a great deal, but I have had very little income on what I composed. This program is paid well, so I have what I need."

"What do you think about the future of the accordion?"

"I think the accordion has the future for itself. It has progressed tremendously over the last twenty years, yet I illustrate that it does not keep

up with the artist behind the instrument. We now have such skilled accordionists, so we should have better instruments. I hope the manufacturers realize that.”

“You have a completely different bass system than the usual, can you explain that?”

“Yes, it is a so-called melody bass, but it is placed in two full-tone scales that in turn have doubled so that I have a 4-row bass. The same system Reuther has in his Uniform Keyboard. Melody bass is the only thing right, by the way, if it is going to be musically correct.”

## 200 compositions published

During the conversation, I was told that Frosini was born in Sicily in 1885 and emigrated to America in 1905. That he had published about 200 compositions, he held membership in A.S.C.A.P. that means the “American Society of Authors and Publishers”, the only accordionist that is elected in this distinguished society, that has received this membership as a recognition of the high quality that characterizes his compositions. That the “American Accordionists Association” awarded him a plaque for the work he did to raise the status of the accordion. That he was one of the first to record on a gramophone and it was on Edison’s phonograph. Then at Victor Company. That he plays on the radio every day, except Sunday, and on Thursday mornings, also play a solo.

## Physically broken, but with all soul-fortunes preserved

To all my questions, Frosini answered plain and clear, his psychic powers had not subsided. He read notes *prima vista*, could virtually remember a melody after playing it once. His memory was excellent, and he asked with interest how we were doing in Sweden.

“I’m so happy that you enjoy my compositions there”, he said.



I no longer wanted to strain the tired but deliciously friendly Frosini but asked if I could help him for a taxi.

“Thank you”, he replied, “but I sit here for an hour and catch my breath, I usually do so after my broadcasts, I can’t go out on the street immediately. Then I take a car and go home.”

So physically tired and weak is the great Frosini, but his fierce and great love for music, that he devotes the last of his powers to what matters and has meant the most in his life.

*Birgit Kejving*

Three months before Frosini’s death, his accordion and some of his music sheets were stolen from the radio station WOR.

Marcello Roviaro took over the program at WOR when Frosini became too sick to continue.

Frosini’s music was perhaps forgotten in the United States, but not in Europe. In 1985, concerts were held in Sweden, Finland and Italy, among others, to mark the centenary of Frosini’s birth. Lars Ek was invited to the church in Castelfidardo, Italy. In Sweden was given a Frosini concert in Stockholm 1986, which is expected to return every year. The initiator of this concert is Lars Ek, one of today’s best interpreters of Frosini’s compositions and his bellows technique.



*Chairman Lars Ek submits the Frosini Society’s honorary diploma to Gunnar M. Ohlander in Des Moines, USA, 1987*

# Frosini's recording

We start with his recordings on phonograph cylinders:

- Edison Cylinder 103: "The Wedding of the Winds" waltz by John T Hall Published in April 1909.
- Edison Cylinder 192: Overture to "The Poet and the Peasant" by Franz von Suppé. Published in August 1909.
- Edison Cylinder 223: "Seneca Waltz" by Frosini. Published in October 1909.
- Edison Cylinder 247: "Amoureuse Waltz" by Rudolphe Berger. Published in February 1910.
- Edison Blue Amberol Cylinder 1861: "The Wedding of the Winds" by John T. Hall. Edited in July 1913.
- Edison Blue Amberol Cylinder 2107: "Amoureuse Waltz" by Berger. Edited in October 1913.

These two cylinders were re-releases in an indestructible form of the original recordings on wax cylinders.

In 1914, a brand-new series was featured on Edison Blue Amberol and Edison Diamond Disc (disc number in brackets).

- Edison Blue Amberol 2531 (50215): "Echoes from the Movies" Published in February 1914. The back of the Edison Diamond Disc was Frosini's march "Through the Park."
- Edison Blue Amberol 2537 (50199): "Panama Exposition Overture" by Frosini. Published in March 1915.
- Edison Blue Amberol 2567 (50199): "Italian Fantasia" by Frosini. The catalog stated: "Includes many characteristic Italian tunes, played with brilliant variations. This is without a doubt one of the best accordion records ever made." The back of the Edison Diamond Disc was "Panama Exposition Overture."

- Edison Blue Amberol 3052 (50454): “New York Blues”, a Rag Classical, paired with “Saxophone Sobs” played by Rudy Wiedoft on Diamond Disc. The catalog wrote about “New York Blues”: “Frosini is considered one of the best accordionists the audience can listen to. He has made a resounding success in vaudeville across the United States. He has written this piece himself. He calls it ‘a classic ragtime ’.” “It sounds like an absurdity, doesn’t it? But it is not. Look up the word classic and think about whether, with a certain poetic freedom, you can apply it to this piece. It seems conceivable. In any case, this ragtime is very different from most others.”
- Edison Blue Amberol 3082 (50432): “Stradella Overture” by Flotow. Diamond Disc had a flute solo by Weyert A. Moor on the other side: “Offertoire” by Donjon.
- Edison Blue Amberol 3108 (51030): “Carneval of Venice.” On the other hand, a cornet solo, “Belive Me If All the Endearing Young Charms” by Ernest Albert Couturier. -This record, as well as “New York Blues”, appears on the bestseller list.
- Edison Blue Amberol 3127 (51397): “Sonata in C major”, together with “Duo Concertant”, a clarinet duet by Anthony Giammatteo and Fred J. Brisset.
- Edison Blue Amberol 3753 (50477): “I Hate to Lose You”, medley, paired with All Star Trio and played “Hindustan Foxtrot” on Diamond Disc.
- Edison Blue Amberol 4113 (50872): “Valse Caprice No.1” with “A Perfect Day” Xylophone solo by Lou Chiha “Frisco”, on Diamond Disc.
- Edison Blue Amberol 4129 (50749): “Medley of Old-Time Tunes”
- (Potpurri on old songs) along with another solo of “The Wizard” “Curro Cuchares March” (The Bullfighter.) This record really shows “the magician’s” versatility as an accordion player.

Here’s how it says in the catalog:

“Many have asked us to reissue this tune (Curro Cuchares March.) It was formerly known by the name ‘Italian Army March’, probably because it was a favorite number of Italian military orchestras. The melody is written by Gerardo Metallo and Frosini is particularly careful to play it exactly

as the composer wishes. Mr. Frosini is well known to the American public as a vaudeville artist, but not many people know that he studied at Milan's famous conservatory."

On the next page, it sounds different: "This lively potpourri always makes a success with Frosini's vaudeville audience and will certainly do so with this record. Several of the tunes are Frosini's own. The old known ones that the accordionist weaves together are 'Sailor's Hornpipe', 'Arkansas Traveler', 'Annie Laurie', 'Irish Washerwoman', 'Pop Goes the Weasel', 'Hail! Hail! The Gang's All Here' and 'The Minstrel Boy to The War Has Gone.' It was not necessary to point out that Mr. Frosini's technique is perfect."

In January 1910, the Victor Recording Company released its first recording of Frosini: Berger's waltz's "Amoureuse" on Victor 16434. On the other side was an ocarina solo by another Italian, Mose Tapiero, who played "The Swiss Shepherd." Sam Rous, the catalog editor, wrote: "A brilliant recording of a popular waltz expressively played by a new Victoria artist. Mr. Frosini is a remarkable a concertina player and himself an entire orchestra." Apparently, someone at the gramophone company made the mistake of calling Frosini's instrument for concertina instead of accordion.

He made four more acoustic recordings for Victor. No. 16482 came out in June 1910. It was "Spring Flowers Waltz", a composition of his own, coupled with Charles L. Johnson's "Dill Pickles Rag", played by the Pryors Band. In July, no. 16493 came with Frosini's interpretation of Delibes "Naila Intermezzo" and on the other side again Pryors Band, this time with "Happy-Go-Lucky Two Step." The editor wrote: "Signor Frosini gives us here a favorite piece from Delibes popular ballet, which he plays with outstanding skill."

A month later, Signor Frosini showed his versatility by showing that, despite attending the Milan Conservatory, he learned to appreciate and understand American ragtime. On Viktor 16501 he played his own "Operatic Rag", while a mandolin player, Roger Casini-Florenz, on the other hand played "Napoli-Tarantella" by Mezzacapo. The editor wrote: "An interesting combination is Mr. Casini-Florence's skillfully played mandolin piece and the original opera parody that Mr. Frosini calls 'An Operatic Rag.' In passing, it may be mentioned that Victor now began to call Frosini's instrument Accordion grand." The last time Frosini performed as a Victoria artist on an acoustic recording was in December 1910. On Victor

no. 16829 he played his own “Echoes of Naples” (Echo from Naples) while Estudiantina Trio, on the other hand, played “Araby March” on two mandolins and a bandura. – a kind of lute. It is interesting to note that these five recordings were made on a two-run accordion with two lines of melody base. Several years later, Frosini returned to Victor’s list of several electric recordings made specifically for the international market. These included No. 81222, edited in August 1928: “Aida – Fox Trot” and “Silver Moon Waltz”, and No. 81368, edited in November of the same year, comprising the rollers “Beautiful Heaven” and “Vision of Love.” Frosini’s qualified competitor, Pietro Deiro, also contributed to the 81,000 series and both also appeared in another international series whose number began with V.

In November 1929, Frosini was represented by V-20, “Coquette Polka” and “Serenata Primaveraile.” In the Italian part of the 1930 Victory Catalog, number V12047 from August 1929, which contained two solos by Frosini, “Carmen Fox-Trot” and “Fior d’Oliva.”

It should be mentioned in passing that “Naila-Intermezzo”, mentioned earlier in the section on acoustic recordings on Victor, soon came out in a more suitable connection, now on No. 16933 together with “Entr’acte Gavotte” (Gille), a xylophone solo by William H. Reitz.

Here is a list of his other Victor recordings:

V-32	“Fragrant Flowers” / “Dizzy Accordion”
V-57	“Come my Love!” / “Florette”
V-125	“Beautiful Heaven” / “Vision of Love”
V-12128	“A Malva Rose’ emmiez O Grano-Waltz” / “O Silencio-One Step”
V-12142	“Pensieri Alegri – Waltz” / “Mazurka Italiana”
V.12242	“Mazurka Amabile” / “Lettera’e Suldato Medley”
V-12306	“Love Smiles – Tango” / “Thoughts of Love – Waltz”
V-12404	“Cielo Sereno – Waltz” / “Vision D’Amore – Waltz”
V-12598	“Angelina Mazurka”

Many of the Victoria recordings were re-released later, sometimes with various connections, such as: “Aida – Fox-Trot” / “Silver Moon Waltz” was reissued on 12-81222; “Beautiful Heaven – Waltz!” / “Vision of Love – Waltz” on 12-81368, etc. Frosini’s own “Angelina Mazurka” recorded on Victor V-12598 was re-released on 25-7075 together with “Il Re-

turno di Pietro" (Pietro Deiro's famous march Pietro's Return), played by Pietro Deiro and Frank Gaviani. "Frosini's Symphonic March" / "La Mariposita, bolero" was released on 24605. Some of the Victoria recordings were also re-released in Scandinavian the market of His Masters Voice with the following titles:

X-4667 "Happy Thoughts" / "Italian Mazurka"  
 X-4944 "Silver Moon Waltz" / "Vision of Love"

Some of these HMV releases held the English title:

X-6027 "Serenata Primaveraile" / "Come My Love"  
 X-4323 "Symphonic March" / "La Mariposita"  
 X-4466 "Love Smiles" / "Thoughts of Love"  
 X-4875 "Dizzy Accordion" / "O Silencio"

The recordings that Frosini made in England during his stay there came out different record labels and even under different pseudonyms, e.g. "G. Arditi":

Beka 460 "An American Rag" / "An Operatic Rag"  
 470 "The Winds of the Wedding" / "Rigoletto Fantasia"  
 520 "Amoureuse Waltz" / "The Aristocracy Coon"

Edison Bell Winner 1077 "Poet and Peasant Overture" – Part 1 and  
 22145 "The Aristocracy Coon" / "The Glow Worm Intermezzo"  
 2433 "Amoureuse Waltz" / "Wedding of the Winds"

Edison Bell also made a more expensive record, Velvet Face, which was claimed practically lacking disk noise. The 1913 directory contained the above six Frosini recordings, but in slightly different combinations. No. 1084 recorded on both sides "Poet and Peasant", "Glow Worm" and "Amoureuse" was found in 1090, while 1098 contained "Wedding of the Winds" and "The Aristocratic Coon." In the catalog there is also a picture of one young, small and somewhat fragile Frosini. The caption reads: "Frosini, who has just completed an engagement at Empire, Leicester Square, London, has recorded for us some of his most famous numbers. This



artist has been gifted with a wonderful ability and his speed passages are fantastic.” -“Poet and the Peasant” remained in Edison Bell’s catalog until the company disappeared from the market in the 1930s.

In the Coliseum brand, you can say that “G. Arditi” was really Frosini, few titles are his own number:

- |           |     |  |
|-----------|-----|--|
| Colosseum | 140 | “A Ragtime Pearl” / “An Autumn Twill”    |
|           | 163 | “American Rag” / “Intermezzo – Two-Step” |
|           | 207 | “Operatic Selection” / “Amoureuse Waltz” |

Frosini contributed three discs in Decca’s catalog when the company started in 1934:

- |  |      |   |
|--|------|---|
|  | 210  | “Carneval i Venice” and “Valse Chromatic” |
|  | 211  | “Accordiomania” and “Hot Fingers”         |
|  | 1029 | “Bubbles” and “Cordinella”                |

On April 8, 1937, Frosini played in four pieces for the short-lived the company Master: “Gauchos on Parade”, a paso double and “Winx Novelty” was published on MA-130. The other two titles, “Sicilian Shore Waltz” and “Fancy Twisters Novelty” were never released.

Other mixed titles by Frosini on smaller companies:

Accordion Archive:

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| AAS-7901        | “Florette Waltz” / “Coquette Polka”  |
| Ariel K940      | “American Rag” / “Operatic Rag”  |
| Artuelle 020672 | “On to Paragon” / “Rag in D minor”   |
| Clartone C-3027 | “Medley of Old Favorite Airs” / “Stradella Overture”   |
| Empire 1034     | “Poet and Peasant Overture” parts 1 and 2  |
| Gennett 4670    | “Amoureuse Waltz” with “Belphigor March”<br>played by Alexander Price at the concert.                                |
| Globe 4006      | “Medley of Old Favorite Airs” / “Stradella Overture”   |
| Harmograph 637  | “Stradella Overture” together with Waldteufel’s<br>“Estudiantina Waltz”, played on xylophone by<br>Raymond C. Ellis. |

Oriole 154	"Stradella Overture" together with "I Love The Girl Who Kisses" (Wolf & Haden) with Olympic Dance Orchestra
Oriole 169	"Medley of Old Favourite Airs", together with "She Wouldn't Do What I Asked Her To", foxtrot by Gottlieb, Boutelje and Burt. Played by Lucky Strike Orchestra with vocal by John Ryan.
Panachord 25738	"Carnival of Venice" / "Accordiomania"
Panachord 25845	"Cordinella" / "Bubbles"
Famous 5001	"Light Cavalry" / "Stradella Overture"
Milophone 346	"Poet and Peasant Overture", Part 1 and 2
Paramount 20031	"Down in China Town", foxtrot medley / "Just Like a Gypsy", foxtrot medley
Paramount 33066	"Light Cavalry Overture" / "Stradella Overture"
Pathe 20672	"On to Paragon", march / "Rag in D Minor"
Puritan 110312	"Down in China Town", medley / "Just like a Gypsy", medley
Radiex 4063	"Light Cavalry Overture", along with van Eps' "Coconut Dance", banjo solo by Fred van Eps.
Rolf Winner	
Success 2433	"Amoureuse Waltz" / "Wedding of the Winds"
Scala 212	"The Rag Tag Rag", together with "Laug hing Billy", a solo on the watches by G. Reed.
Zonophone 5705	"Silver Moon", Waltz with "When its Springtime in the Rockies", a drum by Woolsey-Sauer, played by the Hilo Hawaiian Orchestra.

It is interesting to note that most of the recordings Frosini made on various record companies were his own compositions. Since the record label usually tells the artist what they want him to play – mostly known or popular material – this is important. Apparently, the record companies realized Frosini's outstanding talent in creating beautiful melodies. In the

early 1940s, Frosini made eight of Italian music with a trio (Frosini Trio) of the Harmonia brand:

- H-2036 “Bel Fiore” – Tarantella / “Baciami Semper” – Mazurka.
- H-2037 “Sogna de Madre” Waltz / “Ritorna L’allegria”, polka.
- H-2038 “Naples in Festa” mazurka / “Bel Viso”, polka
- H-2039 “Sogno di Giovento”, mazurka / “Carezze” waltz

There is also a 7-inch record of the brand Majestic No. 164, “On to Paragon”, March along with “My Own Iona” (Gilbert), played by the Majestic Military Band. The record label states composer for “On the Paragon” as P. Frosini and the artist’s name is Petro Gruffrida!

Two 16-inch discs record recordings from Frosini’s radio broadcasts. One is World Radio Transcription Nr. AC-20, which contains the following solons: “Rhapsody No. 2 in C Minor” / “Love Smiles”, tango / “Jolly Caballero”, Paso double / “Hot Point”, novelty / “Olive Blossoms”, waltz.

The other is NBC Thesaurus Orthoacoustic Radio Transcription No. 1405, “Musik Hall Variations P. Frosini”, solo with accompaniment of Radio City Hall’s large symphony orchestra: “Carneval in Venice” / “Nola” (F. Arndt) / “Espana”, Waltz (E Waldteufel) “Under Double Eagle”, March (Wagner) / Final from “William Tell” (Rossini).

This is the end of the chapter on Frosini’s recordings, but unknown recordings can still be used. For example, some music notes from Alfred Music Co indicate that the compositions are recorded on the label MARVEL, but none of these have ever been found.

After all, every famous accordion artist has played and maybe even recorded any of Frosini’s compositions.

# Frosini's compositions

Here is a list of the compositions that published, and then the arrangements of Frosini who published.

Accordiomania, novelty  
Accordion Jitters, scherzo  
Accordion World March  
(also available in arr for orchestra)  
Alfalfa, country dance  
Alpine Festival, waltz  
Amore, rumba  
An Operatic Rag  
Angelina Mazurka  
Army and Navy March  
Autumn Breezes, waltz  
Barber of Seville Blues  
Bats at Sunset, scherzo  
Bel Fiore, tarantella  
Bel Viso, polka  
Blue Island Blues, foxtrot  
Blue Mood, swing Intermezzo,  
(also New York Blues)  
Brave Matador, paso doble  
Brittania, fantasy  
Bubbles, novelty  
Carmelita, tango (also duet)  
Carnival of Venice, variations  
Celestial Whispering, tango  
Chile Beans, rumba  
Coney Island Strut, blue novelty  
Cordinella, novelty  
Glamor Girls, waltz  
Happy Thoughts, waltz

Country Dance  
Cubanola, rumba  
Dizzy Accordion, novelty  
Dolci Ricordi, serenata  
E Pur Ti Amo, mazurka  
Echoes of Bogota, dance  
Echoes of Naples, polka  
Echoes of Spring, waltz  
Enchantment , tango  
Etude in C Major  
Exposition Overture,  
(also Panama  
Exposition Overture)  
Fancy Twisters, novelty  
Fiesta Cubana, rumba  
Finger Acrobatics, novelty  
Fish Scales, novelty  
Flashing Fingers, waltz  
Flirtation, scherzo  
Florette, waltz  
Fragrant Flowers, waltz  
Frosini Memorial Waltz,  
(with trio composed by  
Andrew Walter)  
Frosini Symphonic March  
Gauchos on Parade, paso  
doble (also for orchestra)  
Pemberton Inn, foxtrot  
Pemberton Inn, waltz

Happy Wedding, polka  
 Hot Fingers, novelty  
 Hot Points, novelty  
 Hungarian Fantasy  
 Italian Fantasy  
 Italian Royal Blues, foxtrot  
 Kiss of France, waltz  
 L'etna, polka  
 La Coronita, bolero  
 La Mariposita, bolero  
 Little Doll, novelty  
 Los Rancheros, paso doble  
 Love Smiles, tango  
 Loveliness, waltz  
 Mazurka Amabile  
 Mazurka Variata  
 Mulberry Street Blues, foxtrot  
 Musetta Mazurka  
 Mutt and Jeff, foxtrot (also duet)  
 Northern Skies, mazurka  
 Olive Blossoms, waltz  
 Omaggio A Pietro, overture  
 On the Air Waves, march (also  
 1935 New Year Greetings march)  
 On to Paragon, march  
 O' Silencio  
 Overture in C Major  
 (also, Sonata in C Major)  
 Pastoria Accordion School March  
 Tidleewings, novelty  
 Trieste Souvenir, march  
 Valse Chromatique

Radio Waves, waltz  
 Rag in D minor  
 Rhapsody #1 in D Minor  
 Rhapsody #2 in C Minor  
 Rhapsody #3 in A Minor  
 Robins at Sunrise, scherzo  
 Russian Fantasie  
 Scherzo in Eb Major  
 Seneca Waltz, (also duet)  
 Serenata Primaveraile, waltz  
 Shake a Leg, polka  
 Shivering polka  
 Sicilian Serenade  
 Sicilian Shore, waltz  
 Silver Moon Waltz, waltz  
 Skippin Along, novelty  
 Snow White, mazurka  
 Spaghetti Tangle, novelty  
 Spic and Span, polka (duet)  
 Swedish Italian mazurka  
 Sweepstakes, novelty  
 Tail Spin, scherzo  
 Tarantella in E Minor  
 (only one part)  
 The Gay Picador, paso doble  
 The Jolly Caballero, pasodoble  
 The Sunkissed Waltz, waltz  
 Thoughts of Love, waltz  
 Through the Park, march  
 Vieni Amore, waltz  
 Waltz of the Mountaineers, waltz  
 Winx, novelty

# Frosini's arrangement

A Malva Rose, waltz	La Traviata, variationer (Verdi)
A Media Luz, tango, (Donato)	Long, Long Ago (beginner arr)
Alpine Shepherd, variationer (Morlacchi)	Mazurka in B flat (Chopin)
American Patrol, overture medley (also, for orchestra)	Mendelssohn Concerto, 1 <sup>st</sup> Movement
Beautiful Heaven, waltz (Fernandez, also for duet)	Minute Waltz (Chopin)
Clair de Lune (Debussy)	Mozart's Symphony in G Minor
Conchita, habanera Antonini)	Norwegian Dance (Grieg också för duett)
Coquette, polka, (Gioviali)	Pilgrims Chorus (Wagner)
Coriolan Overture (Mozart)	Polonaise in A Major (Chopin)
Dark Eyes (Budinov)	Rachmaninoff 2 <sup>nd</sup> Concerto
Echoes from the Movies (potpurri)	Scheherazade (Rimsky-Korsakow)
Emperor Waltz (J. Strauss)	Semper Fidelis, march (Sousa, also for duet)
Espana Waltz (E. Waldteufel)	Shortnin' Bread, variationer (Trad)
Etude de Concert (Wollenhaupt)	Tu Sais, tango (Walters)
Gay 90's, Overture, Medley (also, for orchestra)	The Bee (Schubert)
Hungarian Dance No. 5 (Brahms) (also, for duet)	Valse in C# Minor (Chopin)
Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 (Liszt)	Vision of Love, waltz (Curtis)
Italia Nova, march (Antonini) (också för duett)	Voices of Spring (J. Strauss)
International Patrol, medley	Waltzing Doll (Poldini)
	Washington Post, march



# Frosini's compositions for piano

Frosini also composed some music solely for piano:

Barcarole	Moonlight Voyage
Just Because	The Butterfly
Lullaby	The Chalice
Minuet	The Rose and the Butterfly
Murming Brook	Valse Caprice

Frosini composed two more pieces, which have not yet been published. These are the rumba "Golden Slippers" and "Trix-Scherzetto." He is also said to have composed pieces such as "The destruction of Mount Pele", "Catania March", "General Ciano", "Torino Mazurka" and "Swedish Steel Mazurka." It is possible that he had these names on some of his compositions but changed them to something else before they published. A similar example is the beautiful waltz "Olive Blossoms." Before it was released, it was known as "Spanish Waltz." You should not bring Frosini bigger than he was. He was no platon; no Goethe and he were no Beethoven. But he was one thing: He was the best that could happen to the accordion during the first half of the 20th century. Let's get down on our knees and thank him for this. Marcello Roviario tells us: "I started my studies for Frosini in 1935. But because of his In poor health, it was not always possible to get lessons. I started to substitute for Master Frosini on WOR's music program about 1942 and continued with it until he had to quit of illness in June 1951. Then I became a permanent member of the orchestra until the program was discontinued in the early 1960s, due to the orchestras being replaced with discs and tape recordings. I also had the privilege of substituting for him on many engagements when he was ill. As you probably know, his accordion was stolen from the radio station along with manuscripts and arrangements. Frosini never cared about locking the accordion in the special cabinet, where the other musicians stored their instruments. The reason was probably that he was not strong enough to carry the accordion back and forth, especially during the last years of his life. He also never had insurance on his instruments. The man you mention, who bought one of

his accordions from his sister Rosa, was Frank Alfidi, who at that time had a large accordion studio in Yonkers, New York. As far as I know, he never had anything to do with Master Frosini, so why he wanted his accordion is more than I understand. Alfidi could not play button accordion, even less master Frosini's bass system.

Rosa, who took care of Frosini in his last months of life, did unfortunately, get rid of everything. Therefore, it is difficult to really know what happened to all his music sheets and more. I know he worked at an accordion concert. He had begun with the second sentence first. As I can remember, it had one almost spooky, very beautiful melody as the main theme of the second movement. He also wrote at an accordion school. Even that got away. Furthermore, Frosini had manuscripts for other unpublished compositions, which was stolen on the radio station. I remember he wrote 'Mournful Thoughts', an elegy in memory of Lloyd La Vaux's father



*Lloyd La Vaux*

and I can also remember a little of the melody as he played it, though no notes are left for this tune, as far as I know. For all the years I had the great pleasure of spending time with the Master, he never mentioned that his parents also came to America. I don't think he had any favorites among his students. I know that he went over such things as a musician and teacher. He was a very careful teacher who did everything, maybe more than anything, to develop one student's talent as far as possible. He told me that some students had to stop with him because they did not have the talent, he demanded of them. During all the years I was happy enough to be his student, friend and colleague, he trusted me and discussed with me about problems he had with his students, but what was said between us stayed between us. It makes me very happy and I'm sure Lloyd La Vaux feels similarly, to see that the interest and enthusiasm for Frosini's music is maintained life and it seems to be so, especially among the European accordionists. Frosini had a great natural aptitude for melodic creation and his style really shows the many different character characteristics of accordion. He has left a wonderful legacy to all of us accordionists."

## Frosini gives good advice

Frosini says: The button accordion should be played with the thumb on the right side. If the accordion loses air, it has asthma and cannot be played, as little as a tenor with this disease can sing “Laugh Pajazzo.”

The accordion manufacturers should remove the noise from the keyboard, both on the right and in the left hand.

The accordion should keep its own tone character and stay away from organ tone.

Accordionists in groups should learn to play WEAKLY.

The left-hand basses should remain basses and therefore they must be written in bass clef.

The weight of the left side of the accordion should rest on the bellows to be able to perform tremolo (bellow shaking) and arm movement should be horizontal, not vertical.

Accordion students can not only rely on their teacher to be a good musician. Accordionists need so much natural talent that it too most of it is the lack of such talent that hinders development and not lack of ability of the teacher.

The lack of scientific method in the teaching of accordion is much disheartening. Obviously, nothing is being done to improve the relationship.

The accordion should be built on the same principles as the cars, with all the mechanical perfection that skilled engineers constantly strive to develop. There are many vital parts that need improvement, especially the sound of the flaps.

Music publishers should include an accordion part in their orchestral arrangements of popular pieces and organizers should acquaint themselves with the tonal possibilities of the accordion, which are nothing like other instrument. This would stimulate demand for accordion in orchestras and improve the current relationship.

Many compositions contain a few tricky passages. As a student one should not be let down if one encounters difficulties to master these beats, without stubbornly holding on to the task until you get out of it the clay, aware that one must learn to crawl before one can walk.

What Vincent Pirro said in his illustrative article about the role of the accordion in the orchestra was very interesting. He felt that when the ac-

cordion was turned on by the conductor and gets a spotlight on him, he must give everything he has. But he forgot to mention that one must have an instrument that corresponds to all the artist's demands. The best tune character for orchestral activity is then the tone is hard and firm, but perfectly tuned.

## Frosini arranges “Carnival of Venice” for accordion

*(From Accordion News 1934)*

It is the kind and friendly spirit that is so characteristic musicians in general, who make you feel at home with Samuel Manus at Alfred Music Company. Sam, as all his friends call him, was a former conductor at Boston Opera Company and the conversation is filled with anecdotes from ancient times.

Sam says that Alfred Music Company has a big surprise in readiness for all ambitious accordion players. No less than Pietro Frosini, often called the accordion Paganini, is arranging the Immortal “Carnival of Venice”: It Was Really a News!

Sam wants the accordion to come as close to a classic instrument as it is possible. Preferably he wants it in the orchestra pit.

Because he is aware of the great possibilities of the accordion and brilliant prospects, he is constantly trying to raise the instruments standard. With Frosini's unmatched involvement, he really can do it.

What musical values Frosini's compositions contain, you can read from the fact that RCA-Victor has recorded most of his work, which are played and appreciated all over the world.

“Frosini's compositions and arrangements for accordion are striking effective, but still useful for teaching purposes. His experience as a concert and radio artist as well as accordion in orchestra, has gave him a special insight into what builds a successful accordion composition. Therefore, Frosini's contribution to accordion literature an exclusive collection of accordion pieces, all written especially for the instrument. We really want to advise you to listen to these musical beads played by Frosini at the stations

WOR and WINS, New York. These compositions are also recorded and can be purchased at RCA-Victor's records. If they are not at your record store, write to Alfred directly Music Company, 145 West 45th Street, New York City.

It's specially useful for accordionists to play these discs over and over on different speeds to perfect their playing or improve their style." By the way, Frosini has probably arranged more of the now so popular Spanish music for accordion than any other organizer. The hot, the wonderful rhythms of rumba, tango, bolero etc. receive an incomparable deep expressiveness when interpreted on accordion.

Frosini, who was well aware of the qualities of this charming music, followed his musical instinct and worked it for accordion. Thus, he renewed the accordion repertoire and did the good taste a great favor.

## The show continues!

Light! Curtain! Music! The audience in the big Radio City Music Hall awaits excitement while a magnificent performance takes shape in front of their eyes on the biggest stage in the world, because here they will see and hear today's top performers.

A colorful parade paints a street image from Venice. A gondola slides slowly by, an operatic train rises to sing an aria, one collection of beautiful girls performs graceful dance steps. Then there is a rush of excitement through the people on stage when you hear music from outside. It is an accordion! The music grows stronger and the accordionist arrives.

He is wearing a red handkerchief and is dressed as an Italian troubadour. But even so, it's easy to recognize him – nobody less than Frosini! "Carnival of Venice" flows under his good fingers and as he approaches the final, he gives signs to Erno Raapee's orchestra in the pit to follow him. With a breathtaking display of bellows the number ends.

The applause comes from the audience and Frosini plays his own "Jolly Caballero" as extra number.

What an exciting experience this show – which took place for several years ago – would be for Frosini's admirers! What an inspiration for that accordion students who can look forward to similar successes! As the



### *Frosini's single note bass system*

**The Bellows**  
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

*Moderato*

1st  
2nd  
3rd

B  
O  
O  
T  
T  
O  
M

Bellows Side

1st  
2nd  
3rd

Chromatic Scale

4th  
5th

4th  
5th

T  
O  
P

# My melody bass system

*From Accordion World July 1939*

The development of a unique and effective left-hand keyboard,  
which began in Italy many years ago.

*By P. Frosini*

The accordion's standard bass system has an octave with base and fixed bass chords played with a button for each chord. My left-hand keyboard runs chromatically, just like I did Chromo-piano-keyboard. The buttons in the third and fourth lines (see diagram) forms a chromatic scale, beginning at C in the large octave and goes to E in two-line octave.

This gives me a range of more than three octaves. Each button in the third and the fourth-row controls three voices, of which two are unison and one third one octave higher. As shown in the diagram, others also give fifth the line the same notes as the third and fourth, but an octave lower. That way I avoid long jumps to reach an octave lower. The first line is also a doubling of the fifth, but in a different position. This makes fast passages easier in the base. I don't use the thumb in the base. Of the other four fingers I use my little finger to most bass aisles and take the chords with the other three fingers. I then choose the reverse of the chord that sounds best or is the easiest to reach.

I started playing on this bass system when I was nine years old. My father, who was amateur musician on accordion, showed me. From six to nine years of age I had satisfied myself with playing an accordion with four basses and eleven keys in the right hand.

The accordion with chromatic keyboard in both hands was very popular in the city of Catania in Sicily, where I was born. There was a factory that manufactures such accordions and the owner was named Rosario Porto. His son, Salvatore Porto, was an accomplished accordionist and I took the impression of and was inspired by him the first time I heard him play, which was when my father bought one instrument at the Porto factory. He played the overture to "Norma and Intermezzo" from "Cavalleria Rusticana." He treated the bellows in the same way – with bellows shaking – as I do. He was the first I heard performing such a tremolo with the bellows.

My father showed me how to put my fingers to play the scale. That was enough. In three months, I was able to play polkas, mazurkas, waltzes, quadrilles and marches with remarkable skill. In less than one year I played the overture to “Norma” myself.

My career as an accordion player ended abruptly at this time, as I started in a music school and the accordion was taken from me, it absolutely was prohibited. For six long years I did not touch the accordion, but I did not forget it. Nor did I forget how to play. When I had finished my studies at music school, I went back to the accordion, but now with a proper music theory background.

The accordion I had used until now had only two base rows, corresponding to the third and fourth in the diagram. The low basses were very weak, but I managed with this kind of instrument until around 1910, when Pietro and Guido Deiro came with the piano accordion with 120 basses.

I quickly started working on getting more powerful basses and had built an accordion with the second and fifth rows added (see diagram). These two rows controlled the powerful parts an octave lower. This innovation made it possible for me to play more powerfully accompaniments. Recently, I added another bass line, which constitutes the first line of the chart.

I have found this basic system to be very practical and effective for every kind of music.

## Frosini analyzes

The difference between a radio musician and a concert artist.

*By Pietro Frosini*

In our large family of accordionists, one must admit that a great measure of self-acceptance blinds many of its members. They invoke merits and talents based on limited views, trapped as they are among their own shadows. No progress, no development of technology, no feeling. In short: they show no love for their instruments, just for themselves.

It amuses me that the accordionists from several years back, who have known the atmosphere from the days of the vaudeville consider themselves the best in the world accordion players, when in fact they are just on the threshold of Temple of Art. It's sad to hear this little click condemning special, technical effects for not being able to produce them themselves.

There are several so-called "Star Accordionists", which for a few years then still looked for the C bass, but who now declare themselves to be the biggest artists on accordion. Their pumping with the bellows can't handle the simplest analysis from a technical point of view. – They pull the bellows forward too back and that's all. They should admit that there is something called bellows technology and which others have learned to master to perfection using their musicality. These accordionists would be happy to be selected to play on the radio, for example, because the radio has meant everything to them. Giving concerts is something completely different. Due to lack of knowledge of the tonal values and possibilities of the accordion, one allows one player with elegant technology to appear in front of the microphone to entertain an audience that is too easily impressed by a firework display quick finger runs. A violinist, a cellist or any other instrumentalist whatsoever, is not released on purely technical merits. A violinist may possess great dexterity, but if his rhythm guidance lacks expressiveness and his interpretations are bland, they show him the Exit.

The requirements for a concert artist are different in that way only technology insufficient. A concert artist must possess all these qualifications. You must remember that anyone can acquire dexterity, it's just a matter of time and practice. Expressions and interpretation, on the other hand, cannot be learned. They must come from within, from heart. Anyone who does not have an artist's heart has nothing on the concert line to do.

About radio executives, managers, agents, sponsors, advertisers, orchestra conductors etc. knew as much about accordion as they know about piano or other instruments, some of those who are now reaping success in radio, being referred to occasional odd jobs here and there.

The accordion seems to be the only instrument where you can make a success dexterity alone due to the listener's ignorance. I am questioning some so-called "big" accordionists stardom, which by playing some worn-out fleet numbers the audience, as in exchange provides a royal crown, which is eagerly and hungrily accepted. It is sad to see how badly the crown fits so small demonstration of ability. I've never heard any accordion

player play an entire piece like that written by the composer. Let me take one example: "Flight of the Bumblebee." One masterpiece that was mercilessly chopped to pieces by several organizers, including accordionists.

I have a hard time understanding why you give so much praise to a musician who simply takes a few beats here and there from one far classic piece like "Flight of the Bumblebee." That someone can recite a verse of Dante's "Inferno" by the outside, does not mean that he has learned the whole of Dante's "Divina Commedia."

Now let's analyze the meaning of the word "concert artist" – a title that many claim. A concert artist does not play for an invisible audience, sponsored by an unimaginative, artistic artist. A concert artist plays for a real audience, consisting mainly of professional's musicians, competent critics and music lovers.

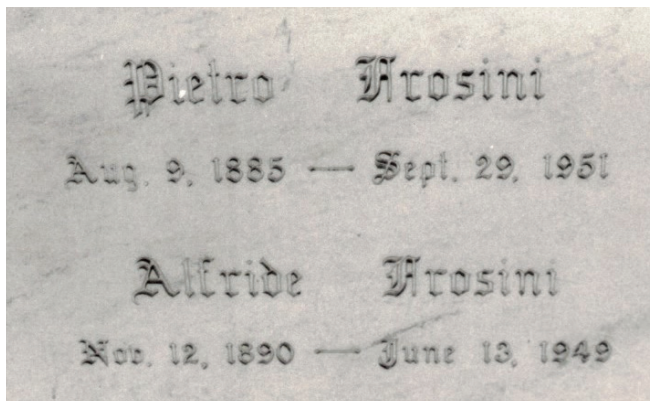
A concert artist spends all his time improving, polishing and perfecting both technology and expression. As a researcher, he investigates unknown elements the study's own sake. In his privacy he turns his mind away from the outside world and let their artist's heart speak through the foremost of all forms of expression – Virtuosity.

It is not my desire to present myself as a living example on an abused superlative: the BIGGEST accordionist. With a career and an experience well known in the accordion world, however, I am one of the artists who have penetrated the art of the concert band. However, I would not get annoyed if someone called me a radio artist, because you too can convey art on radio. My radio broadcasts are not noticed all over the country, depending on the accordion in radio until now they have not got the right sponsors.

Accordion manufacturers and major retailers should present our instrument on the radio, played by our own artists. The accordion currently enjoys the greatest interest as in the American audience has ever devoted any instrument. People's interest is eager and enthusiastic. A real artist, a real musician, who does not build his repertoire on two or three classic pieces but on hundreds of compositions, could with radio help for the entire nation present the most brilliant, emotional and persuasive accordion programs that you have ever heard.

## Frosini turned 66 years old

On September 29, 1951, Frosini died, 66 years old. His wife had died two years earlier.



The Accordion World had the following obituary in October 1951:

### Frosini passes away

One of our finest and most beloved fan carriers for the accordion does not exist anymore! Frosini died on September 29 in his home after a long-time disease.

He was born in Catania in Sicily 66 years ago as the son of a professional accordionist, Michael Angelo Giuffrida who taught him the basics and love of music. During his school years he came to enjoy the cornet and learned to play very well – so good that he was offered employment in the English Navy when he was 16 years old. After less than two years he became seriously ill with Malaria and admitted to a hospital in Malta.

When he recovered, he joined the English Navy and his vessel was destined for San Francisco in 1905. There he met a professional mandolin player who had a hard time getting hold of an accompanist for their difficult pieces of music. Frosini, who had become exceptionally skilled both



on accordion and piano, offered to play the pieces prima vista on accordion – and did so extremely well, that it led to one career as a soloist at the vaudeville theaters. He traveled around the country and abroad, right up to 1932. He toured for Keith Orpheum, Pantages, Loews, etc. When the vaudeville was closed, Frosini started with a small, but highly qualified group of musicians under Vincent Sorey's lead in John Gambling's program at WOR, where he contributed a lot musically for the next 20 years, until last spring he was affected by the last illness which eventually led to his death. He was buried beside his beloved wife in Cypress Abbey. He leaves behind sister Rosa and brother Natale Giuffrida. The brother is a prominent accordion technician and avid amateur accordionist.

Frosini's outstanding musicality has helped to increase the accordion reputation. His memory was huge, and his brain was so productive when it was about composing music for the accordion, that his compositions number are several hundred, most of them published by Alfred Music Co. Its manager Sam Manus was one of the first publishers to realize Frosini's talent.

It is believed that Frosini was the first to perfect the bellow shaking technique and used it – something that has gotten great significance for today's audience.

## An irreplaceable loss for the entire accordion world

*Obituary in the Accordion Times, November 1951*

Pietro Frosini, world famous accordionist and composer, passed away last month at the age of 66 in his home in Woodside Queens, USA.

He was born in Sicily on August 9, 1885. His father was a farmer and a very talented musician. As a child, Pietro Frosini learned to play accordion, cornet and other instruments. While playing in the English Navy in Malta, he was sought out by a vaudeville agent from The United States that offered him a contract for appearances in America. When he left the Navy in 1905, he traveled to New York and started with Orpheum and B.F. Keith theaters. He was one of the first accordion soloists and in 1908 made

the first gramophone recording for Victor Co. In 1911 he toured England and gave a “Command Performance” for King George V. After retiring from the scene, he devoted his time to teaching, playing on the radio and composing. He composed over a hundred works, including well-known favorites such as “The Jolly Caballero” and “Olive Blossoms.” For twenty years he participated regularly in John Gambling’s radio show.

*In the Accordion Journal November 1951, Birgit Kejving wrote:*

## Frosini is dead

A great musician and a wonderful person has passed away. I do not own the knowledge of his personal life and musical deeds, which would have given me reason to enter memoriam, but then Frosini’s and my friends John Reuther and Walter Eriksson, both in person informed me of his passing, I want to do my best.

Through John Reuther, I was offered on the last day of my American residence the chance to meet Frosini. I’ll never forget the impression he made on me. Tired and weakened by illness but radiated an interior power and glow that no physical illness could weaken. He also got to, despite two months of bedtime, still retain his faculties. On September 29, he fell asleep, calm and still. He was 66 years old at his death and weighed only 49 kilos.

The funeral took place on October 2 and he was followed to the grave by his sister Rosa, who cared for him during his illness, Brother Natale Giuffrida, America’s foremost accordionists and many friends. The name Frosini was an artist name. But it will live long. His life scourge, his wonderful compositions will not die. These melodies, so musical, so personal and genuine, will belong to the classical repertoire.

He did not reap any gold on his compositions but did not question it either. As the true artist he was, he did not worship payment. The music was his life. I remember some of his last words stated before we parted in WOR’s studio in New York: “I’m so tired, I can’t handle much. I only live when I play.”

Yes, I understand him. When his body forces so completely subsided, that he could not play anymore, he could not live either.



Pietro Frosini with his accordion.

# EPILOG

With today's new technology, it is possible to obtain information about immigration, entry, marriage and burial etc. in USA. All data is stored in data registers and is available to the public. One of the members of the Frosini Society, Louis Coia from Great Britain, has researched the various archives and obtained new facts about Pietro Frosini's life that can now be reported here for the first time.



# Pietro Frosini – From Italy to the USA

*By Louis Coia*

Pietro Frosini was born in Mascalucia a large town 10 Km north of Catania.



*The Photo above is of the town of Mascalucia*

He was born on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1885 and he was the son of Michael Angelo Giuffrida.

Pietro's early years have been outlined in an article by John Molinari and as I am fairly certain that most people who are interested in Pietro are already familiar with Mr. Molinari's writing I see no need to repeat his findings here.

I do however have a problem with Mr. Molinari's view that Pietro went to the USA arriving in California in 1905.

My own research has produced the following results.



# Palermo to NYC

Pietro sailed from Palermo Sicily aboard the SS Principe Di Piemonte on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1907 arriving at Ellis Island on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1907. He was sponsored in the USA by his father's brother Giuseppe Giuffrida.

Form No. 10  
Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

SALOON, CASIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

289 S. S. PRINCE DI PIEMONTE sailing from PALERMO 17 SEP 1907 190

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Line	Name	Age	Sex	Rank	Calling or Occupation	Religion	Country of Birth	Place of Birth	Last Permanent Residence	The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence alien came	Final Destination
241	Amato	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
242	Montanari	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
243	Maggio	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
244	Baronessa	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
245	Baronessa	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
246	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
247	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
248	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
249	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
250	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
251	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
252	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
253	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY
254	Giuffrida	30	M		Seaman	Catholic	ITALY	Palermo	Palermo	John J. Amato, 111 E. 10th St., New York	NY

The above image is an extract from the manifest of the SS Principe DI Piemonte. Pietro Giuffrida is listed on line 6 his father's name is shown as Angelo.

## 1910–1911

In the spring of 1911 Pietro is on the move again. I have found the passenger list for the RMS Romanic which left Naples on 12th April 1911 arriving in Boston Massachusetts on 25th April 1911. Pietro's name appears at the bottom of the ship manifest page. On his arrival at Boston he has signed a form when re- entering the USA. The signature on this form is I believe a genuine match for the signature on his WW2 Draft. This draft also names Pietro's wife Alfride so I am fairly certain that the Pietro who sailed from Naples on 12th April 1911 is the Accordion Maestro.

What was Pietro doing in Naples at this time? Is it possible that he was on route back to the USA from Malta? It has been said that he spent some time there playing Cornet in the Royal Navy band. I have not been able to verify this. It is also possible that he was in Malta prior to going to the USA in 1907. It may be that he had returned to Italy from the USA at some point in the previous year or early in 1911 for personal reasons.

Having said that Pietro crops up again later in the year of 1911. After returning to the USA from Italy at some point he sails for England. His name together with that of his father appears on the ship manifest for the SS George Washington sailing from Southampton on 12 September 1911 bound for NYC.

We know that Pietro came to England for professional reasons but I have not found any references to that visit in the newspapers of the time.

The images attached below are (a) The Ship Manifest for the RMS Romanic and the form showing Pietro's arrival at Boston. The Romanic was owned by the White Star Line.



1914

All I have regarding Pietro in 1914 is a signed photograph which he gave to his friend Torchio Otello. Otello arrived in the USA in the same year as Pietro 1907 but he came from Southampton in England to NYC on the SS Celtic.

1915

The document below extracted from the New York Census gives us a rare glimpse of the entire Giuffrida living together in New York in 1915.

New York, State Census, 1915 for Natalie Giuffrida  
New York > New York > A.D. 31 E.D. 18

(C-2)

**Enumeration of the Inhabitants of Block No. 12, Election District No. 12, Ward No. 32, City or Village Albany**  
 Town X, Assembly District No. 31, County Albany, State of New York  
 Name of Institution X Enumerator 12

PERMANENT RESIDENCE		NAME	RELATION	COLOR, SEX AND AGE		ACTIVITY	CITIZENSHIP	OCCUPATION	
Street	House Number	of each person whose usual place of abode on June 1, 1915, was in this family. Enter surname first, then the given name and middle initial, if any. Include every person living on June 1, 1915. Omit children born since June 1, 1915.	Relationship of each person to the head of the family.	Color as shown.	Sex.	If born in this country write United States; if of foreign birth, write name of the country.	Native born or naturalized citizen.	Trade or profession, or of work done by, each was enumerated.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
118 <sup>th</sup> St W	11	Sgt. F. Leonora	Head	W	F	60	Russian Poland	12 28	No Occupa
11 11 11 11	11	Guifrida Michael	Head	W	M	57	Italy	2 11	Musica
11 11 11 11	11	Guifrida Sadie	Wife	W	F	53	Italy	2 11	Housew
11 11 11 11	11	Guifrida Rose	Daughter	W	F	20	Italy	30 11	No Occup

The Document below shows Pietro in the New York Directory of 1915 as Pietro Frosini.

**ESTEY PIANO CO** 23 W42d Tel  
 Bryant 4100, 112 Lincoln av Tel Mel-  
 rose 3500 (See page 2190)  
 Evans W C L 160 E84th  
 Evenchick Israel 190, 2d  
 Favilla Bros 177 & 200 Grand  
 Favilla Victoria 2330 Hoffman  
 Fink David 396 Bway  
 Fischer Carl (firm of) 46 Cooper sq W  
 Frosini **Pietro** 241 E115th  
 Galizi Eugenio & Bro 124 Mulberry  
 Gemunder Aug & Son 141 W42d  
 German-Am String Co 133 Canal R1  
 Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Co 71 W23d  
 R1521  
 Glaesel A Hermann 987, 3d av  
 Hamburg Geo 141 E116th  
**HAYNES GEORGE W** 103 W42d  
 (See page 2176)  
 Hohner M (firm of) 114 E16th  
 Horvath J D 1037, 3d av  
 Hultman Frank 171 E86th  
 Iorio Augusto & Sons 161 Mulberry

The document below is Pietro's WW1 Registration Card dated 1917-1919

REGISTRATION CARD									
SERIAL NUMBER		815		LOCAL NUMBER		231			
1. Name (Last, first, middle initial) <i>Pietro Frosini</i>									
2. Present home address <i>241 E 115th St New York 23 NY</i>									
3. Date of Birth		4. Place of Birth		5. Date of Arrival		6. Date of Registration			
1901		Italy		1917		1917			
7. Race		8. Religion		9. Education		10. Occupation			
Italian		Catholic		High School		None			
11. U. S. CITIZENSHIP									
12. Alien Status		13. Alien Status		14. Alien Status		15. Alien Status		16. Alien Status	
Alien		Alien		Alien		Alien		Alien	
17. Does anyone in the U. S. of whom you are aware, know of you? <i>Yes</i>									
18. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
19. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
20. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
21. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
22. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
23. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
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25. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
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32. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
33. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
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37. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
38. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
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40. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
41. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
42. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
43. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
44. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
45. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
46. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
47. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
48. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
49. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									
50. Where born in the U. S.? <i>Italy</i>									



# Marriage

Pietro marries Alfride Larsen on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1920 in Philadelphia see Marriage License

Index below and Marriage Record.

ORPHANS' COURT - PHILADELPHIA			
Marriage License Index - 1917 to 1938			
Giudice Angelo L. (Gurracino)	1954	M	642745
Giudice Caroline (Gatto)	1955	F	650296
Giudice Marie F. (DiGenova)	1926	F	825017
Giudice Paul L. (Pellini)	1926	M	668685
Giudicini Caterina (Merchant)	1928	F	569471
Giude Angelina (Parri)	1920	F	456608
Guerra Concetta (Varallo)	1922	F	470208
Giuffre Antonina (Spasichchi)	1919	F	405427
Giuffre Basil (Repici)	1958	M	686660
Giuffre Nicholas A. (Guerrino)	1956	M	671685
Giuffre Nunzio (Miraghiotta)	1925	M	485787
Giuffre Rose (Deflevis)	1920	F	421827
Giuffre Rose (Dirlevis)	1920	F	427489
Giuffreda Maria (Corsaro)	1918	F	381611
Giuffrida Alfredo (Pizzo)	1956	M	680212
Giuffrida Angelo (Corsaro)	1928	M	564702
Giuffrida Mario (DiFilippo)	1954	M	500268
Giuffrida Pietro (Larsen)	1920	M	419110
Giuffrida Stefano (Aprile)	1917	M	380826
Giufri Maria (Kecaris)	1927	F	550691
Giugno Grace (Buggiero)	1920	F	419094
Giugno Mary (Tropiano)	1919	F	412860
Giulano Luca (Dardenelli)	1919	M	409815
Giuliani Beniamino (Toanucci)	1922	M	457977
Giunta Marie (Canna)	1956	F	686785
Giunta Pasqualina (Calabro)	1925	F	609242
Giunta Salvatore J. (Ascensi)	1925	M	653247
Giunta Thomas (Anastasi)	1920	M	569465
Giunta Vincent (DeSalle)	1924	M	547720
Giunto Agnes (Domoco)	1926	F	561806
Giunto Carmelo (Rafo)	1921	M	441406
Giunto Frances (Clulwei)	1918	F	388738
Giunto Teresina (Russo)	1921	F	442712
Giurponi Salvatore (Renna)	1921	M	441750
Giurato Anthony (Martin)	1922	M	469295
Giuseppe Magro (Santa)	1921	M	454056
Giuseky Michael (Radowitz)	1920	M	595555
Giusti Attilio Henry (Casassa)	1917	M	360060
Giusti Louis (Winters)	1925	M	475555
Giusti Mary (Mango)	1921	F	447651
Giustiniani Anna A. (Lancellotti)	1922	F	619552
Giustiniani Thomas (Albini)	1920	M	455575
Giustino Angelo (Simione)	1938	M	385702
Giusto Giuseppe (Bassafari)	1918	M	591046
Giusto Quinto (Siano)	1918	M	590671
Giuzzio Filomena (DeMarco)	1917	F	358692
Givndan Anna (Butko)	1921	F	459114
Givvns Rose (McFadden)	1920	F	587585





## Record Transcription: United States Marriages

[Learn about this record set](#)

First name(s)	Alfride
Last name	Larsen
Sex	Female
Father's first name(s)	-
Father's last name	-
Mother's first name(s)	-
Mother's last name	-
Event	Marriage
Year	1920
Event date	09 Mar 1920
Location	Philadelphia
Place	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States
County	Philadelphia
State	Pennsylvania
Country	United States
Spouse's first name(s)	Pietro Frosini
Spouse's first name(s)	Pietro Frosini
Spouse's last name	Giuffrida
Spouse's sex	Male
Spouse's father's first name(s)	-
Spouse's father's last name	-
Spouse's mother's first name(s)	-
Spouse's mother's last name	-
FamilySearch film number	004447955
Record set	United States Marriages
Category	Birth, Marriage, Death & Parish Records
Subcategory	Civil Marriage & Divorce
Collections from	Americas, United States

The following images are from the US Census years for 1930–1940

## 1939–1940

The document shown below shows Pietro listed in the Queens Telephone Directory for the years 1939–40

Fogarty Joe 131-13 24th St. .... LA union 8-2750	Froscher Jerry 43-09 43d LIC ..... ST ilwrl 4-0926 F
Fogarty Ken 143-17 38Av Fishing IN dependce 3-2750	Froschaug Fredk 39-33 57th Wdwd HA vemyr 6-3897 F
Fogarty Chas W 190-19 Queens Rd St Alb LA union 8-7826	Frosina John MD 159-54 95th HardBch VI rginia 3-8927 F
Foghtman J 30-86 47th LIC ..... AS baris 8-5118	Frosini P 41-41 46th LIC ..... ST ilwrl 4-8579 F
Foghtlich Edw L 111-04 35Rd FrstHls 80 uland 8-2937	Frost A 93-41 HollyCourt 181 QnVI MI ssouri 7-4584 F
Foghtlich Walter 99-33 65Rd FrstHls HA vemyr 3-7704	Frost Edmund L 91-33 84th Wdwn VI rginia 7-4589
Foghtlich Walter 35-46 90th Jctt HA vemyr 6-7040	Frost A J 13917 87Dr ..... RE public 9-4987 F
Foghtin Albert 123-18 MetrolinAve KwGd VI rginia 7-0586	Frost Alfred 39-72 54th HA vemyr 9-3103 F
Foghtman Albert MD 94-47 212th QnVI MI ssouri 7-4515	Frost Andrew L 39-40 65th Wdwd HA vemyr 6-1535
Foghtman Irving G MD 33-02 RkwyBch Blvd RkwyBch ... BE ilwrl 5-3884	Frost Christian 47-49 189th FL ushing 7-1789 F
Foghtman Albert MD 33-02 RkwyBch Blvd RkwyBch ... BE ilwrl 5-3884	Frost Donald L 41-35 81st Elm HA vemyr 6-2740

**DORSEY GENERAL  
APPLIANCES, Inc.**

**FRIGIT**

## Guffrida Peitro Frosini

United States Census, 1930

Tools

Name:	Guffrida Peitro Frosini
Event Type:	Census
Event Date:	1930
Event Place:	Queens (Districts 0751-1000), Queens, New York, United States
Gender:	Male
Age:	44
Marital Status:	Married
Race:	White
Race (Original):	White
Relationship to Head of Household:	Head
Relationship to Head of Household (Original):	Head
Birth Year (Estimated):	1886
Birthplace:	Italy
Immigration Year:	1906
Father's Birthplace:	Italy
Mother's Birthplace:	Italy
Sheet Letter:	A
Sheet Number:	6

Household	Role	Sex	Age	Birthplace
<b>Guffrida Peitro Frosini</b>	Head	Male	44	Italy
<a href="#">Alfride Frosini</a>	Wife	Female	38	Denmark

## Petro Frosini

United States Census, 1940

Tools

Name:	Petro Frosini • <a href="#">Edit</a>
Event Type:	Census
Event Date:	1940
Event Place:	Assembly District 2, Queens, New York City, Queens, New York, United States
Gender:	Male
Age:	54
Marital Status:	Married
Race:	White
Race (Original):	White
Relationship to Head of Household:	Head
Relationship to Head of Household (Original):	Head
Birthplace:	Italy
Birth Year (Estimated):	1886
Last Place of Residence:	Same Place

Household	Role	Sex	Age	Birthplace
<b>Petro Frosini</b>	Head	Male	54	Italy
<a href="#">Alfride Frosini</a>	Wife	Female	49	Denmark

1942

The Document below shows Pietro Frosini mentioned in the Syracuse Herald Journal in December 1942.

So Adolf's Army switched from goose-steps to goose-pimples! . . . John Steel, tenoring at Oetjen's, Brooklyn, recalls his first singing ate in the Borough of Churches, 27 years ago—in a synagogue, as oloist . . . Pietro Frosini, who vauleville'd a quarter-century as eordionist, joined the Robotti Academy . . . Seth Babits will have is maiden song effort, "Dancing in Dreams With You," launched ver the Blue Network by Vince Lopez . . . Now that Gaston Henry-laye and his Vichy staff are our guests in Hershey, Pa., at the lershey Hotel, the Hershey bar has more nuts in it . . . Some people re beefing because they can't get what they want. They're lucky hey aren't getting what they deserve! . . . There's still a theater in ontreal named the Laval.

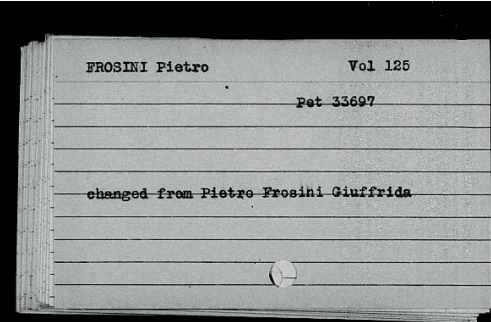
1951

The document shown below is the record of Pietro's death in 1951

New York, New York, Death Index, 1949-1965 for Pietro Frosini														
1951														
FROMM FRANCES	64	3	11	1	M	2684	479	FUCHS HENRY	76	11	19	1	Q	10104
FROMM ISIDORE	74	5	14	1	M	10634		FUCHS JENNIE	68	6	27	1	X	4381
FROMM ISIDORE	62	2	24	1	M	4201		FUCHS JOSEPH	76	11	17	1	Q	10072
FROMM MARY	62	4	24	1	M	19455		FUCHS MALE	108	10	14	1	N	21150
FROMMANN PAUL	54	4	27	1	M	1827	3426	FUCHS MICHAEL	88	11	2	1	X	10443
FROMMEN CLARA	70	8	10	1	M	15345		FUCHS OTTO	67	2	14	1	M	3565
FROMMEN ROSE	73	4	30	1	X	9267		FUCHS PHILIP	85	4	30	1	Q	4055
FROMMEN SAMUEL	69	5	27	1	A	5391		FUCHS REGINA	78	2	11	1	M	1432
FROMMEYER ANNA	76	6	7	1	M	11529		FUCHS ROBERT	71	7	26	1	M	15784
FROMODA FRANK	61	11	29	1	A	20470		FUCHS ROSE	66	6	25	1	M	13379
FRONC ALEXANDER	63	10	3	1	M	1954		FUCHS SARAH	65	8	1	1	M	14972
FRONCZKOWSKI JOH	65	8	29	1	M	14412		FUCHS SIEGFRIED	67	11	15	1	M	23671
FRONCZKOWSKI PAU	60	1	1	1	M	511		FUCHS SIMON	58	10	29	1	M	20158
FRONTENAS EUGENE	33	1	18	1	M	171	25	FUCHS SOPHIE	73	2	27	1	M	4525
FROME JOHN	68	4	26	1	M	0477		FUCHS WILLIAM	83	2	28	1	X	2219
FROMEL WADDALEN	02	4	9	1	M	17125	3221	FUCHS WILLIAM	48	6	18	1	M	13142
FROMENFIDER ABR	51	8	27	1	X	2207		FUCILE GIUSEPPE	70	6	5	1	M	12315
FROSINI PIETRO	66	9	29	1	M	0412		FUCILLO JENNIE	64	1	18	1	M	1338
FROSINO AUGUSTIN	70	6	18	1	M	12785		FUDGE HARRY	53	1	10	1	M	792
FROST MC	66	0	27	1	V	31		FUDGE HARRY	53	1	10	1	M	792
FROST ISA	52	7	8	1	V	31		FUDGE LEVENIA	26	10	11	1	M	2112
FROST MOR	55	10	15	1	V	31		FUDGER GERARD	74	4	19	1	X	4080
FROST ANNE	38	0	6	1	M	1600		FUELL DOROTHY	27	4	11	1	M	8816
FROST LEMIS	74	9	16	1	M	12062	6744	FUERKENSTEIN MAR	43	9	3	1	Q	7660
FROST MARGUERITE	64	3	1	1	M	1699		FUERTE JERUSA	55	6	2	1	M	871
FROST SARAH	54	6	28	1	Q	589	123 of 585	FURTERER JUANA	62	8	16	1	X	7908
FROST WILLIAM	62	3	18	1	M	461		FURDERER PAULIN	01	10	0	1	X	2380

# Naturalization

The documents below show Pietro's application to become a citizen of the USA the cards are undated so I have included them here. It has been noted that he has changed his name from Giuffrida to Frosini.



► Information

Name	Event Type	Event Date	Event Place	Age	Birth Year
Pietro Frosini	Naturalization		Queens, New York, United States		

Pietro Frosini

New York, County Naturalization Records, 1791-1980

Tools

Name:

Pietro Frosini • Edit

Event Type:

Naturalization

Event Place:

Queens, New York, United States

Volume:

Naturalization index 1906-1941  
Duritz, Emily-Gurwitz, Harry

Note – The birth years given for Pietro and Alfride are estimates based on the ages given by Pietro and Alfride at the time of the census. They are not actual birth years. See family tree.

Note – My intention with this short piece has been to produce accurate information regarding Pietro's arrival in the USA his marriage to Alfride Larsen and the use of a couple of census forms showing how he gradually




transforms how he is known from Pietro Giuffrida to Pietro Frosini. You will also notice the spelling errors regarding his name.

Note – The 1930 census shows that Pietro arrived in the USA in 1906. This is not only at odds with the information on the SS Principe DI Piemonte's Manifest but it is also at odds with Mr. Molinari's claim that he was already in the USA by 1905.

Note – I have not found any record of a Pietro Giuffrida arriving in California. The vast majority of Immigrants arrived at New York. See below.

#### California, San Francisco Passenger Lists, 1893-1953

[Search all collections](#)

California, San Francisco Passenger Lists, 1893-1953 

No Results for Name: **pietro giuffrida** Birth place: **italy** Birth Year (Range): **1884 - 1886**

Number of results to show:

Name	Events
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### Family Tree of Pietro Giuffrida Frosini

<b>Michael Angelo Giuffrida</b> <b>(Sadie)</b>  <b>b) about 1859 Sicily</b>  <b>m) about 1884</b>  <b>d) ?</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Rosaria Butera</b>   <b>b) 1860 Sicily?</b>  <b>m) about 1884</b>  <b>d) ?</b>
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<b>Pietro</b>  <b>b) 9/8/1885</b>  <b>m) 9/3/1920</b>  <b>d) 29/9/1951</b>	<b>Natale</b>  <b>b) 7/1/1894</b>  <b>m) 17/12/1919</b>  <b>d) 1959</b>	<b>Rosa *</b>  <b>b) 9/11/1895?</b>  <b>m) 12/5/1917 *</b>  <b>d) ?</b>	<b>Grace</b>  <b>b) 1905?</b>  <b>m) ?</b>  <b>d) ?</b>
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### Family of Pietro Giuffrida

<b>Pietro Giuffrida Frosini</b>  <b>b) 9/8/1885</b>  <b>m) 9/3/1920</b>  <b>d) 29/9/1951</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Alfride Larsen</b>  <b>b) 12/11/1890 *</b>  <b>m) 9/3/1920</b>  <b>d) 13/6/1949</b>
--	----------	--

No Children as Far as I know.

**Note – Pietro Frosini was actually christened as Pietro Giuffrida he was born in the Masculucia district of Catania. He immigrated to the USA sailing from Palermo on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1907 and arrived at Ellis island New York City on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1907. His last known residence in Sicily was at Leonforte in or near Palermo.**

**He started using the name Frosini possibly some time between 1915 and 1917.**

**When he married Alfride in 1920 he was calling himself Pietro Giuffrida Frosini. They were married in Philadelphia. Pietro died in 1951 in Queens County NYC.**

**Alfride died in 1949 in NYC.**

**Note –** The birth and death dates for Alfride have been taken from her Headstone. I have only found one record for an Alride Larsen arriving in the USA at NYC. which fits with her being born in 1890 she is listed as Alfrida not Alfride Larsen. She sailed from Copenhagen aboard the SS United States arriving in NYC on 26th December 1914. She was aged 24 years old at the time.

Pietro's mother was Rosaria Butera later known as Sadie. Finding Rosaria has enabled me to finally piece together how the entire family got to the USA.

I am now able to demonstrate how the rest of the family got there.

Pietro's brother Natale and his father Michaelangelo sailed together on the

SS Prinzess Irene no departure date is given but the ship arrived at NYC on 21st November 1912. Contact in New York was Pietro.

Pietro's mother Rosaria and his sister Grazia (Grace) sailed together on the

SS America arriving in NYC on 29th June 1913. I had already found the passenger list regarding Grace but at that time I did not know her mother's name. All I knew was that she was calling herself Sadie see 1915 Census return. They are listed on the ship's manifest as mother and daughter. I now know that Rosaria is definitely the mother and so this confirms this part of the story.

Rosa (Rose) seems to have travelled on her own sailing on the SS Taormina leaving Naples on 21st march 1915 arriving NYC on 14th April 1915. She was 19 years old. Rosa Married Pietro Milazzo in Manhattan New York on 12th May 1917. Pietro was the son of Giovanni Milazzo and his wife Giuseppa Di Stefano.

### **Family of Natale Giuffrida**

**Natale Giuffrida  
DeFusco\***

**=**

**Margaret Rosario**

**b) 7/1/1894**

**b) 24/6/1897**

**m) 17/12/1919**

**m) 17/12/1919**

**d) 1959**

**d) nov 1969**

**Michael Angelo**

**Rita Suzanne Rosario**

**Natale**

**b) 12/3/1921**

**b) 18/4/1924**

**b) 10/1/1932**

**m) yes \***

**m) 15/11/1947**

**m) 1957**

**d) 31/3/ 1986**

**d) 23/10/1972**

**d) 15/5/2011**

**Note - Margaret (Maiden Name) Rosario was 1st married to**

**George DeFusco b) 1893 -d)? They married in 1912. They had two children**

**1) Frances b)1913 - d) ? and George b) 1914 - d)? She then married Natale**

**Giuffrida in 1919 in NYC.**

**Note - Michael Angelo b) 1921 married Catherine Rose b) 12/5/1917 and**

**d) 21/11/2007 See Headstone Photo. No children found as yet.**

**The couple are buried in Gate of heaven Cemetery**

**Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland USA.**

**Note - Rita b) 1924 married Victor Melvin Fischer or Fisher b) 1921 - d) 2005**

**No children that i know of at the moment. See Update below.**

**Note - No marriage or death records found so far for Grace b) 1905 est from 1915**

**census NYC.**

**Note - No marriage found so far for Rose b) 1895 her birth and death dates are for**

**the only Rose Giuffrida found in all databases searched and are based on her**

**age as given on the 1915 census NYC. This woman was born in Sicily and**

**died in USA. So it could well be her.**

**Note - Natale Giuffrida born 1932 married Margaret Defusco\* in NYC in 1957**

**Note - Rita Giuffrida born 1924 married Victor Melvin Fisher 15th November 1947.**

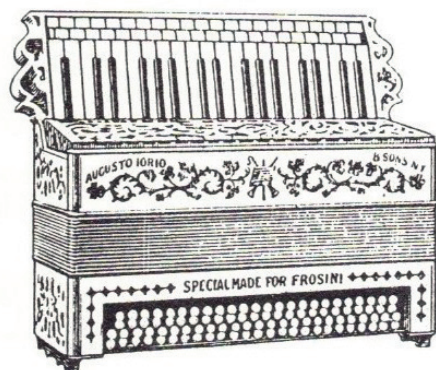
**They had two children Natalee born 1948 and Matthias born 1951.**

**Natalee married Vernon ray Webb on 5th March 1968**

**Note - Natale born 1932 married a Margaret Defusco as did his father. Interesting!**



*Pietro Frosini with his accordion*

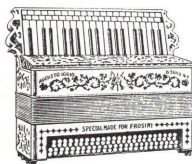


**Model No. 10**  
**FROSINI**

Chromatic Imitation Piano  
Chromatic Bases

1907





FROSINI SOCIETY was founded in 1985 by Lars Ek, who works on a non-profit basis to inform about the old accordion music and the old accordion masters. During 1985 - 2000, FS held an accordion competition every year: FROSINI GRAND PRIX. The contestants came from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Russia, England and Scotland, where the Frosini Society was organized. Every year, a Frosini evening was arranged to give today's youth and the opportunity to meet and perform in front of the old classical accordion music.

We also published our own magazine called FROSINI NEWS, which informed and kept in touch with the members. All Recordings with Pietro Frosini's music as well as all his music sheet are in the Frosini Society at [www.frosinisociety.org](http://www.frosinisociety.org) and if you want to take part in this you are welcome as a member of the Frosini Society. We also have many who, without playing accordion music, support our work by being a paying member, give us the opportunity to continue to inform so that the old music in the future gets its obvious place among tomorrow's accordion players.

In this book where materials and images come from Gunnar M. Ohlander, Des Moines, IOWA, USA, you can read the wonderfully interesting story of Pietro Frosini's life and through unique documentation find all recordings and music sheet in an easily understandable register.

*Chairman of the Frosini's Society*

*Lars Ek*

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