



Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano

By Professor James Parakilas, James Parakilas

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The piano puts whole worlds of musical sound at the fingertips of one player, evoking the singing of a solo voice, the textural richness of an orchestra, and the rhythmic impetus of a dance band. It has been background or center stage in concertgoing, parlor singing, choir rehearsals, theatrical tryouts, and many other activities, forging a common bond among people of very different social spheres. This delightfully written and copiously illustrated book examines the place of the piano in classical and popular musical cultures and the piano's changing cultural roles over the past three centuries.

Eminent authorities discuss the impetus for the invention of the piano; the innovations in its design, manufacturing, and marketing that promoted its growing significance in concert life and domestic life; and the importance of the piano lesson in the upbringing of the young—especially of girls. They explore the relationship between the piano on the public stage and the piano in the parlor; the spread of the piano to all parts of the world; and the images formed around the piano in literature, art, and movies. And they eloquently describe what the piano has meant to different eras, as it evolved from the plaything of European aristocrats to companion of people of all classes and cultures.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The piano turns 300 this year. To celebrate, Parakilas (music, Bates Coll.; *Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade*) has assembled a group of distinguished contributors and fashioned a lavishly illustrated social history of the piano directed at informed lay readers. Interweaving a chronological treatment of the piano's development with thematic essays, including how the piano is depicted in art, its manufacture and marketing, the role of the piano in motion pictures, the piano lesson, and its history in Japan, the authors share their warm regard and enthusiasm for this instrument central to so many facets of music-making. Exploring the piano's well-traveled avenues and little-known byways, this thoroughly entertaining and insightful book complements earlier titles like *The Lives of the Piano* (ed. by James R. Gaines; 1981. o.p.), Dieter Hildebrandt's *Pianoforte: A Social History of the Piano* (LJ 6/1/88), and David Crombie's *Piano* (LJ 1/96). Highly recommended as an exceptional value for all music collections.

-Barry Zaslow, *Miami Univ. Libs., Oxford, OH*

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Review

"In turns highly entertaining and very educational, full of extraordinary facts. An admirable addition to the literature on this subject." Andre Previn "Reaches out to general readers as well as musical insiders... A fascinating cultural history." Anthony Tommasini, *New York Times* "A book that will tell you everything you want to know about the piano, except maybe how to play it... The book is replete with artworks, photos, history, anecdotes, and reminiscences." Herbert Kupferberg, *Houston Chronicle* "A wonderful mosaic of the history of the piano and the diverse parts it has played in its three hundred years of life." Henry Sheen, *New Statesman*

From the Back Cover

Praise for the earlier edition: "In turns highly entertaining and very educational, full of extraordinary facts. An admirable addition to the literature on this subject."—André Previn "Reach[es] out to general readers as well as musical insiders. . . . [A] fascinating cultural history."—Anthony Tommasini, *New York Times* "A book that will tell you everything you want to know about the piano, except maybe how to play it. . . . [The book] is replete with artworks, photos, history, anecdotes, and reminiscences." —Herbert Kupferberg, *Houston Chronicle* "A wonderful mosaic of the history of the piano and the diverse parts it has played in its three hundred years of life."—Henry Sheen, *New Statesman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Blum:

The reason why? Because this *Piano Roles: A New History of the Piano* is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap this but latter it will shock you with the secret it inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who all write the book in such remarkable way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking

method. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I were you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

Keith Abell:

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