

“The Finding of a Treasure”

NPR broadcast, out of Northfield

Oct. 1 or 8, 1991

Recreated to the best of my
recollection, 1-7-1992

We had just been talking about it, and there it was! You see, my boyfriend had all these dreams of making beautiful music together, and we would play places, maybe make a record. He was going to play guitar and I would play the accordion, and we would do things like “Lady of Spain.”

And then I saw it! On a dusty flea-market table, in this little box. When I opened the box, the excitement just flooded over me. Here it was--a beautiful, shiny, red, mother-of-toilet-seat accordion. It was small, one with just a few left-hand buttons, and it was pretty dirty. I lifted it out of the box and it didn't smell good. As I fingered the keys, I noticed the spots of food stuck between them, and in the bellows. And some of the keys stuck when you pushed them down, but I was sure that my thin knife and some WD40 oil would fix them. That mildew smell would probably just wipe out of the box.

The flea-market man came over to me, anxious to make a sale. “Practically brand new. Never been played!” he affirmed to me. Then I pointed out that somebody must have played it sometime, because, look at all the food stuck on it. “Well, never been played by me,” he said. “\$75” he said. I thought of all the dreams of beautiful music we could realize with it. And I thought of how excited my boyfriend would be when I showed it to him.

I took it home and laid it on my kitchen counter, got out my knife and WD40. With a little effort, some of the keys did get better, but I found out that didn't fix the accordion. I wiped on it and its box, but the smell didn't go away either.

In the phone book there was this ad for Acme Accordion School. They did repairs, too. So I made an appointment for the afternoon. How nice it would be if I went and got it fixed and we could start on our musical career this very evening! When I got there a little man named Maurice looked at the case and made a face. He opened it, wrinkled his face. “It's really not smart to buy an accordion at a garage sale,” he said. “Everyone thinks a little WD40 and it's all fixed,” he said. “It's REALLY not smart to buy an accordion at a garage sale,” he restated looking me hard in the face. He wrinkled his nose. “Mildew,” “Junk,” he sniffed again. “See, some idiot oiled this one,” and the rest of his words were fading mumbles. “Now, I bet you want it back in an hour!” By the look on his face I knew that wasn't about to come true. “Everybody thinks you can fix them while-you-wait!”

Well, I guessed I could wait the week.

At the appointed time, I returned to the shop, and Maurice smiled as he opened the case and handed me an instruction book. Running his hand over his now-bald head I could vaguely make out the picture on the book's cover was a much younger Maurice. “Yes, that's me. Now I know why you like red. My hair was once red too.” I could see the memory in his face.

I eagerly pulled it out of its case, and began making sounds with it. Oh, we were going to make such beautiful music. (SQUEEEEEK, SQUAAAAK)

Sure enough, after a few hours, we were achieving the dream!

(“Lady of Spain” is heard simplified and bastardized, but including a bellows-shake.)

[N.B. If the person who wrote/produced this broadcast would contact us, I'd be delighted with a complete, corrected version with proper credits. It has been used in each class of the ARTS curriculum since 1992!]