

# REVIEWS

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Bernard Lortat-Jacob. **Sardinian Chronicles**. Teresa Lavender Fagan, trans. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. x + 118, forward, photographs, compact disc, index, illustrations. \$47.50 cloth \$19.95 paper.

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Bernard Lortat-Jacob portrays the lives of several musician friends and acquaintances in his recent book *Sardinian Chronicles*. His description is not limited to one geographical area, but instead covers a variety of locations and includes stories of local characters whom he met along the way. In this manner, the book imitates the author's travel experiences.

The focus of the book is on the uniqueness of each performer. Each chapter describes one person in a particular town, focusing not on the music specifically, but rather on the musician's personal performance style and on the interaction between the musician, his/her peers, and the listening audience. As an accordionist himself, Lortat-Jacob naturally focuses on accordion players, although he does include some information on "guitar songs" and other styles of music found in each community. His description is generally framed around a particular performance event.

The compact disc that accompanies the book gives the reader a solid understanding of the styles Lortat-Jacob encountered, and is probably why he did not provide a detailed musical description or annotation. The musicians who recorded the disc, however, are not the people described in the book. I was, therefore, left wanting to hear the music of the actual characters portrayed. Furthermore, despite the author's focus on accordion music in the book, there were few actual accordion songs on the disc. It does, however, give an idea of what transpired in Lortat-Jacob's travels, and provides the listener with a better understanding of Sardinian music.

*Sardinian Chronicles* is less a theoretical discussion than a simple, straightforward presentation of people and their customs. The most noticeable drawback is that the book covers so much in just over one hundred pages that much information was obviously left out. While a more thorough account of Lortat-Jacob's travels would have been better, the book is an intriguing and enjoyable read.