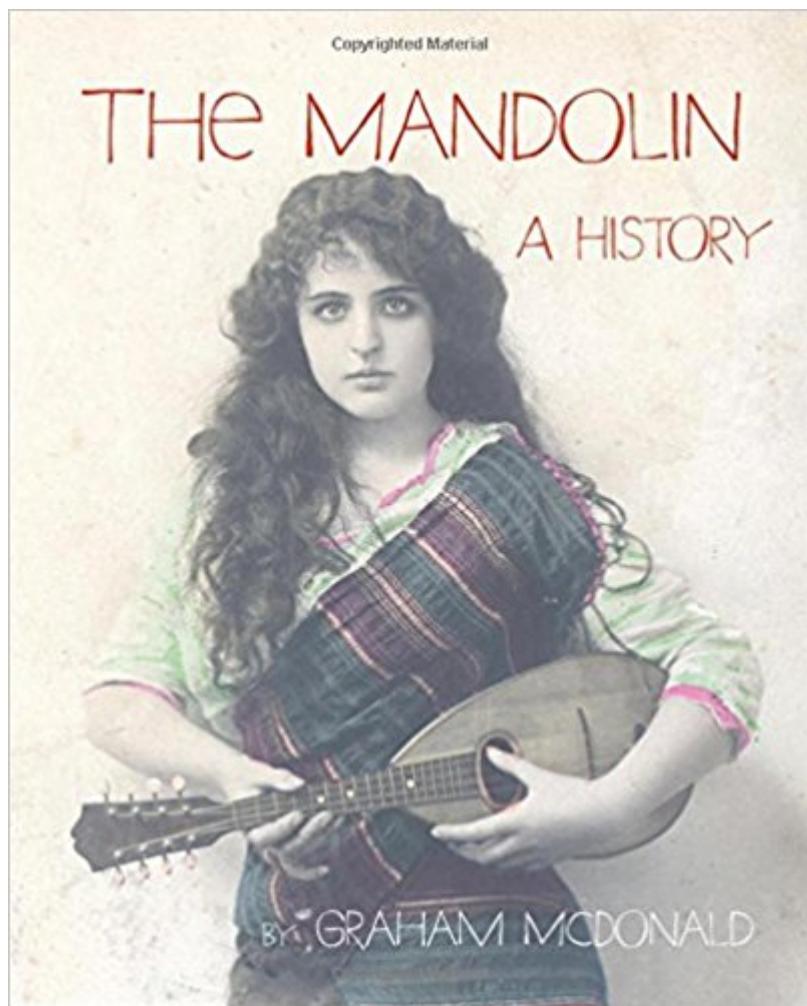


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# The Mandolin: A History



## Synopsis

The mandolin is a fascinating and diverse musical instrument that spans across centuries and continents. With photographs and in-depth details, this book traces the history of the mandolin and its family that can be found around the world. There are detailed stories that tell who, where, why, and how each beautiful piece was made. Included are chapters such as "The American Mandolin," "Gibson," "The Middle Ages & Renaissance," and "Spain, Portugal & Beyond."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Graham McDonald has been building mandolins, bouzoukis and other stringed instruments for more than 30 years. He is the author of *The Bouzouki Book*, on building Irish bouzoukis and citterns and *The Mandolin Project*, a manual for building four styles of mandolin. He lives in Canberra, Australia.

This book has got to be the finest treatment of the mandolin as an instrument to date of which I am aware. I looked it up as recommended by the Classical Mandolin Journal, and have been enthused by the vast range of coverage of a field in which I have a sustained interest as mandolinist and arranger. It is profusely illustrated with high quality pictures of rare instruments and makers in its 400 pages or so. The writer has an incredible competency in the science and construction of the mandolin family. There is sufficient documentation and a helpful index. I have noticed a few typos along the way which I am quick to address in my copy. The book is obviously a labour of love, and it is a pity that its publication and audience is so limited. This book is a gold standard amongst similar

types of studies. I have learnt so much from it that I can take to my endeavours.

This history of the mandolin is well written, researched and comprehensive. As a mandolin collector, it gives real insight into instruments with which I am not familiar.

Great history of the mandolin...I LOVED it.

If you love the mandolin, you will probably love this book and learn from it. I was one of the 300 people who contributed to the Kickstarter campaign that got this book into print, and I'm glad I did. It is certainly the best book on the history of the mandolin that I've seen. If you are an obsessive reader of MandolinCafe posts, you may already know much of what is in the book, but you will still find things you didn't know and photos you haven't seen. McDonald covers an immense amount of information. He includes not only mandolins, but many instruments that are only slightly related to mandolins, from ouds to baglamas to tars to pipas to waldzithers. They aren't mandolins, true, but if you are like me you may find yourself looking one over, listening to it on YouTube, then finding one on eBay. Nearly every time I read a chapter and thought, "I wish McDonald had included . . .," I found a chapter on it later in the book. The book is over four hundred pages long, but I wish it were twice as long. There are several dozen typing errors, but I didn't catch any errors of fact, though there may be a few. Is there anything not in the book that I'd like to see? Well, sure. There are lots of photos of old mandolins in the book, a number of which (mandolins, not photos) I've owned or played (and I loved that), but very little about the characteristic tones of these. (I can confirm for McDonald that the Parker Peerless Octave Bandola sounds as much like a banjo as it sounds like a mandola, and that may be the source of the name.) I would love to see a few hundred more photos of various models and of the work of contemporary builders. Hey, I'd like to see the top hundred builders each get two color pages for photos of their best work. I'd like to see a list of builders. I'd like to see brief bios of the hundred best players, or chapters on the mandolin in various styles of music. That's part of the history of the mandolin. But maybe that's for another book that comes with a DVD of mandolins being played. This is still the book to have. It was a great read.

This is an extraordinarily well written, comprehensive history of the mandolin -- from the prehistoric roots, right up to the modern builders and designers of mandolins currently creating the future for this delightful instrument. The author is an active member of the the mandolin community and has spent years traveling and researching every facet of the book. The text is well-written and easy to

read; the photographs are extensive and broad-ranging. If you are interested in the history and applications of the mandolin in music throughout the arc of human history, THIS is the book to purchase!

Graham's book, "The Mandolin: A History" is a masterpiece of research with a huge trove of information. It provides an excellent resource for anyone interested in the evolution of the mandolin up to the current state of the art. Nothing else written on the subject approaches the quality and sheer volume of information he has collected and I have particularly enjoyed his style of writing.

This is by far the most comprehensive history of the instrument written to date. Nine years in the making, it really has immediately become a defacto reference and is an interesting read for anyone that loves the instrument. If you play the mandolin, you need this book on your shelf.

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