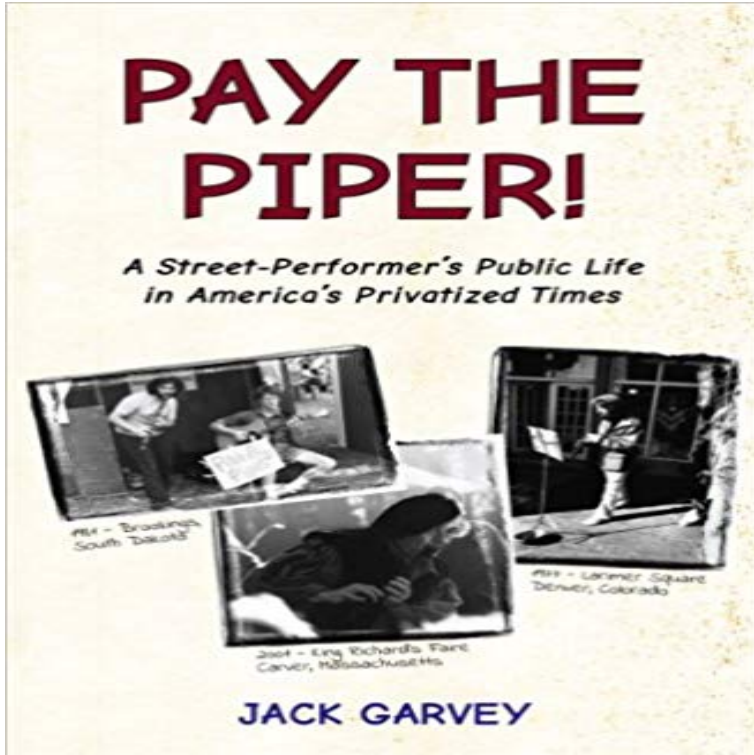


Pay the Piper!: A Street-Performers Public Life in Americas Privatized Times



For those who value views from the proverbial man in the street, a book-length account of one who has played music on American streets for over 35 years will be irresistible. *Pay the Piper!* offers a wealth of street scenes ranging from cheerful to infuriating, delightful to confrontational, heart wrenching to joyous. Several such as *Slip-Jig for Flute & SUV* and *The Shout Heard from the Curb* have appeared as guest columns in newspapers north of Boston where author/busker Jack Garvey has honed a wry, conversational style peppered with word play since 1983. A memoir/manifesto that invites both reflection and debate, *Piper!* is laced as well with commentary. Accounts such as *The Transformative Power of Day Jobs* and *A Fifth of the First Amendment* are for anyone hoping for a return of civility and vitality in public places, for exchanges of good cheer and honest attention rather than the robotic, *Have a good one* and *No problem*. Garvey took to busking when city and town centers across America began losing business to the controlled environments of shopping malls, privately owned and always off limits. As for the Muzak broadcast in malls, his suggestion to find and encourage buskers raises a compelling question: Who, after all, ever says thank you to a loudspeaker? This book traces Americas transformation in time from his earliest accounts in Denver and New Orleans up to the present in the New England tourist towns that Garvey has busked since 1982. From Salem, Oregon, to Salem, Mass., narratives such as *The Only Prohibition Is Inhibition* and *In Need of No Microphone* are served with more observation than opinion, flavored more with satire than rhetoric. Up to the recent turn of century, the most vivid and frequent account any street-performer could offer to describe a busking day was that of the child who stops and stares, curious with wonder, and the parent who then stops to explain

and usually encourage the child. Today, as Garvey reports--and as fellow buskers often tell him--they more often watch the child stop and stare only to be hurried along by a parent on a cellphone, too preoccupied for a child's curiosity. A call to put the concept of public back into that of public place, Pay the Piper! seeks to recapture that attention and curiosity by illustrating how it is done. To borrow the title of an early chapter, Pay the Piper! is Busking in Red, White, and Blue.

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