

Chapter 1 : Blues Harmonica | eBay

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The tremolo harmonica has limited applications, and is therefore the least popular of the three types. There are three basic types of harmonica: The diatonic harmonica is the most common of the three types. Diatonic harmonicas are simple, relatively easy to learn, and most commonly have 10 holes. They are usually tuned to match the key of one of the 12 notes on the musical scale, but beginners are often recommended to start with a harmonica in the key of C. The chromatic harmonica traditionally comes with 12 holes, but may come with 8, 10, 14, or 16 holes, as well. The standard chromatic harmonica is also available in any of the 12 keys, but C is most commonly used by professionals and amateurs alike. The button on the side of a chromatic harmonica is used to produce various tones and semitones, and allows players to play every note in many octaves. With 3 octave ranges and 48 tones, the standard chromatic harmonica can produce notes of which a diatonic player could only dream. The hole variation of the chromatic harmonica produces an even broader range of notes, and because of this, it can take a while to get used to. Its big design can be a bit intimidating, and the extra notes can boggle the mind of an untrained musician. The 8-holed chromatic harmonica provides the exact opposite problem. These harmonicas are great for travel, but their limited range and small size can be a detriment to their being fully engaging for many chromatic players. The third basic variety of harmonicas is the tremolo harmonica. These harmonicas produce a trembling effect in their sound. They accomplish this by using two reeds per hole, one tuned slightly flat and the other slightly sharp. The result is a wobbling, organ-like note which gives these harmonicas their name. There is some uncertainty around this credit, however, as many inventors around the world were simultaneously working on similar instruments in the same year. Free reed instruments controlled with the mouth were created in South America, the United States, and various areas of Europe at roughly the same time. When the first harmonica appeared in Vienna in 1827, it took many by surprise. Many of these harmonicas were purchased, broken down, and duplicated by their purchasers, so their friends and family might enjoy them, as well. This led to some of the first harmonica manufacturing companies in Europe. One man began making harmonicas and shipping them to relatives and friends who had emigrated to the United States, and the reception was overwhelmingly positive. That man was Matthias Hohner. Due to their wild popularity in the United States, Hohner saw the opportunity to mass produce harmonicas and seized it. By 1840, his company was supplying much of the United States. Harmonicas were enjoyed by soldiers from both sides of the American Civil War. The popularity of these instruments made them take on a standardized shape as early as 1840, which only helped to increase the number of players. Most often associated with blues and American folk music, the diatonic harmonica was actually invented to accompany German and European folk music. Unlike many instruments, the harmonica was a success from the very start of production, with a reach extending to multiple continents just a few short years after its invention. **The Harmonica Finds Its Soul** The first harmonicas may have been invented in Europe, but the harmonica found its soul in the United States, particularly in the hands of African American blues musicians. Artists like Sonny Boy Williamson II, Big Walter Horton, and Big Mama Thornton took the simple instrument to expressive new heights through techniques like note bending and vibrato; creating notes from harmonicas that were otherwise unheard of. This contribution would revolutionize the style of play and expand the arsenal of skills available to harmonica players. The relatable problems and gripping lyrical style of blues music spread like wildfire through the country, influencing every form of music that has come since. Further possibilities were explored by a young player named Marion Jacobs, known as Little Walker. In order to cut through the sound of guitar amplifiers of the day, Little Walker picked up a radio microphone and, cupping his hands around it and the harmonica, blew his way into history. The sounds created from harmonica microphones can largely determine the sound of the harmonica itself, with many creating distorted sounds that can resemble an electric guitar.

Chapter 2 : Harmonica - Wikipedia

From Blues Harmonica For Dummies. By Winslow Yerxa. From the beginning, the harmonica has been an integral part of blues music. The blues is a uniquely American art form that got its start from the collision of African and European cultures in the American South.

Most people associate the harmonica with blues, music sounding like this Blues is the most important harmonica style. Once you have learnt the basics, you will be able to play blues with musicians everywhere. The basics are easily learnt. However mastering blues is a lifetime project, which starts today. So far we have used a C harmonica, and played in the key of C, We continue with a C harmonica, but will now play in the key of G. As we explain how blues works, the reason for this change will become clear. Our first task is to find a G note. A powerful one is the second hole draw note 2D , which sounds like this Blues often needs loud and powerful notes. Play 2D repeatedly, starting softly, and then becoming louder each time. It should sound like this Practice until you can play this note cleanly, and with great power. Many harmonica students have difficulty playing the 2D note to begin with. In particular, the pitch often sounds wrong. This is usually because the note has been "bent" down. Bending is a skill you will soon learn, but for now, the aim is to get a clean 2D note. If you are having trouble, try a very light air pressure to begin with. Hopefully the note sounds, and is in tune. Once the note is sounding, then gradually increase the air pressure until you have a powerful note. Be patient, this may take a while. When your 2D is working, then play it with this backing then with accompaniment only You are playing just a single note, the spaces between it are what make the music. This is called phrasing, and is very important in blues. Listen again to the backing track. We discussed chords in a previous lesson. The backing here starts on a G chord, also called a one or I chord, because we are in the key of G. Can you hear where the chord changes? This new chord is a C chord. The backing ends by returning to a G chord. We will soon learn to hear these chord changes in blues. They are very important. Blues harmonica is usually part of blues songs. It is common for blues harmonica players to sing as well. Try singing some blues yourself. Even just a few songs, sung in a basic way, will greatly increase your playing opportunities.

Chapter 3 : Richter-tuned harmonica - Wikipedia

Greg Taylor blowing it up on his harp, with Logan Black backing him up on a beautiful Gibson guitar. Check out more of Greg on his channel! calendrierdelascience.com

A gentle, welcoming approach is unusual in the harmonica teaching world, but it enables him to connect with a wide range of students. What are you waiting for? His love of life brings me joy. His passion for sharing music and connecting with others inspires me. I encourage everyone to explore, experiment and experience all that harmonica playing can do for you and your music. Because of this, he keeps the student from giving up too soon. This enables them to gain mastery via staying with harmonica for the long haul. I am proud of my association with JP Allen and Harmonica. He got me on the right track with my breathing which turned out to be the single most important and influential factor in the development of my playing. He made learning the harmonica "fun"! He will fire you up to get practicing! He makes the world a better place for people learning to play our wonderful little instrument. He reveals some very intricate bending techniques as well as starting a student on the path to playing lightning fast. In this lesson, I explain some of the most important elements of classic blues, as well as blues solos and tips on timing. Thirty years later, it is still one of my favorites. I also explain the bass line. If you understand these three foundational parts, the rest of the song falls into place easily. Find out just how approachable this exciting position is, and learn some licks with me. Joe Filisko Get Amped! Here are my preferences for recorded amplified playing with Eric Noden and Glenn Kaiser, along with some of my basic guidelines on playing amplified harmonica. Amplified harmonica is a lot more than the sound of a harmonica through an amp. Learn why and how to get that classic sound, as well as some microphone hand-technique tips. If you already can do tongue blocking, very good. If not, you can still do it using the pucker method. Practice slowly, but on tempo, gradually increasing speed when you feel more confident. This lesson is for the newly intermediate player. This lesson is for the intermediate player. This lesson is for the advanced-intermediate player. Solo harmonica playing requires that I turn this pocket-sized instrument into the whole band. With these ten holes, I provide the rhythm, the chords, the melody, and the harmony. If you think about it, this is the guitar and the drums laying down a simple groove. Then the harmonica breaks away and sings a cool bluesy riff, returning to the rhythm just moments later to keep the groove going. Watch it several times. Feel free to press pause and learn just a little bit at a time. Feel free to expand on it and make it your own. Let me know how it goes! As a result, no matter how flashy it first appears, after a short time, their playing sounds messy and ultimately unimpressive: If you can play cleanly at a slow tempo, it will help you play cleanly at a fast tempo. This back-to-basics video gives you two useful exercises to help master clean note transitions. Nail these two exercises up to speed, and you will find other licks of any genre much easier to learn. So get your A harp out and play along. Lung capacity expander the stronger your lungs the better your playing will be. Harmonica maintenance In tune with good tone How to hold the harp How to play a clean single note Killer Tone Get the 3. These are your go-to blues techniques. Crucial Blues Techniques As well as the 3. Hand wah Advanced hand techniques for killer blues tone Bending masterclasses Bends on the different holes Jaw vibrato.

Chapter 4 : The Secret to Playing Blues Harmonica

Anwenk Harmonica Key of C 10 Hole 20 Tone Harmonica C Blues with Case Top Grade Heavy Duty for Professional Player, Beginner, Students, Children, Kids Gift (East Top) - Black.

Check out my free harmonica lesson video Happy Harpin! Get Good on Harmonica - With No Hard Work Want to learn how to play harmonica and sound good in less than 3 months " with no hard sweat and tears? How can anyone get good at anything without practicing? The same way kids do. Once you finish one video, you move on to the next. You never have to practice alone because I will be playing with you and showing you exactly what to do every step of the way. I made sure my lessons were designed in such a way that you can progress with just 7 minutes, 3 times a week. The more you play along with my videos the faster you improve! Not only is this way of practicing often boring, but students tend to pick up bad habits without the support of their teacher. As for the other harmonica teachers on the internet! have you noticed that most of the videos are too hard for beginners and the teachers play too fast? My lessons are designed so that beginners and non-musicians can keep up and progress at a steady rate. All you need to do is play-along! Not by me, or any other harmonica teacher. Any other instrument would have required hundreds and hundreds of hours of videos lessons. Within 3 months I will hand deliver you from being a struggling harmonica player to someone who can blow the roof off the house. Long story short, I can play and jam with my friends now and have the ability to keep up, when they start to improvise. This only after watching your lessons for a few days! Brad Cacace - Salt Lake City Play the Blues "JP, you are telling your secrets - thanks to you, a whole new world of true blues music has been opened up. I love popping in a blues CD and just playing along. Sometimes it sounds really good! I am only on the 5th lessons but decided to take a second and write you because I cannot believe that I am actually playing. I sound good already, and I know what I am doing, which is a first! The technique you described made a HUGE difference. JP is very easy to learn from and I liked how that it was still fun. When you buy my complete beginners how to play harmonica course, you get over 15 HOURS of video instruction. The lessons cover everything you need including My course teaches all styles of popular music. Select a harmonica model that performs extremely well but is priced very reasonably for beginners. This report will guide you through selecting an instrument that will get you sounding awesome This software tool will teach you, note-by-note, an awesome 12 bar blues progression No need to be able to read music to use it either! You will also get the complete set of 12 video lessons to take you from beginner to actually jamming and playing melodies on your harmonica! Over minutes of entertaining and instructional videos. I fell so in love with playing music, it pulled me out of my depression. Just a few years later I toured all over the United States and Europe for many years with Grammy nominated Abra Moore and taught her how to play harmonica. And now, my love is for teaching harmonica. In order to spread the gift of harmonica to as many people as possible I decided to make my method and my lessons available as a video course. Getting your video lessons is secure, quick, and easy. Choose from the following two options: Imagine, you will be having a whole lot of fun while getting really good at harmonica, in just a few minutes. You also get a Hohner Blues Band harmonica, at no extra cost. My videos will work on all computers, tablets, and mobile devices And each and every great bonus mentioned on this page is yours to keep.

Chapter 5 : Download Blues Music With Harmonica mp3 Mp3 " Music Trends News

Breakthrough Blues. Breakthrough Blues is an online harmonica course designed to get you playing killer blues quicker and more easily than any of my previous methods.. If you're a beginning or struggling intermediate-level harmonica player, Breakthrough Blues will help you take yourself seriously as a blues musician and performer.

Valved diatonics[edit] The valved diatonic is one of the most common ways of playing chromatic scales on diatonic harmonicas. While chromatic is available, valved diatonic is also common, and there are reasons to use a valved diatonic rather than chromatics. It does not have a slide assembly so that it has less air leakage , and it has a wider tonal range and dynamic. Valved diatonics are made by fitting windsavers on draw holes 1 and 6 and blow holes 7 and 10; this way, all reeds can be bent down a semitone at least, although most players can easily bend down a whole tone. Alternatively, one can simply buy a factory-made valved diatonic such as the Suzuki Promaster Valved. The disadvantage of the valved diatonic is that it does not require one to develop proper embouchure in order to bend the notes accurately. Also, many of the notes reached by bending are nearer just intonation , and the slightly lower equal tempered pitches preferred by western classical music are unattainable. This limits the number of chromatic notes available when playing classical repertoire when compared with that of jazz or blues. Another thing worth noting is that, due to the valved bends being one-reed bends, the sound is less full than traditional bends, and may seem dull, making it less dynamic.

Playing in different keys[edit] Aside from bending, Richter-tuned harmonicas are modal. Playing the harmonica in the key to which it is tuned is known as "straight harp" or "first position" playing. For example, playing music in the key of C on a C-tuned harmonica. More common especially in blues and rock is "crosssharp" or "second position" playing which involves playing in the key which is a perfect fourth below the key of the harmonica for example, on a C tuned harmonica, a second position blues would be in G resulting in the instrument playing in mixolydian mode. This is because the notes of the G pentatonic scale a commonly used scale in blues and rock are more easily accessible on a C-tuned harmonica. The lower notes of harps in the lower keys G through C are easier to bend, but take more wind. Since much of crosssharp is played on the inhalation, every opportunity for exhalation must be capitalized upon by blowing out lots of air on every exhaled note and during every pause. Crosssharp lends itself to seventh and ninth chords particularly G7 and G9 as well as blue notes particularly on D chords, where the harmonica is tuned to play D minor while the other instruments play D major. Another method is to play in the key one whole tone above that of the harmonica. On a C-tuned harmonica, this would mean playing in the key of D. This is known as "slant harp" or "third position" playing, and results in the harmonica playing in dorian mode. This is much less intuitive as it requires the ability to bend notes completely accurately, and there are fewer useful chords available than in 1st or 2nd position playing. The technique offers many notes that are not achievable in the other positions without overblows, such as the blue note on the third degree, which may or may not be favorable depending on the circumstance. The bends available at the lower end of the instrument also make playing melodies in a D major scale relatively easy for those who have any semblance of proficiency at the bending technique, though most of the notes all but the second and fourth, E and G in the scale are on the draw, requiring great skill and strategy in exhaling, even more so than in crosssharp. Continuing along the circle of fifths , fourth position, fifth position, sixth position and zeroth positions can be played, with the scales played in those positions indicated as follows:

Chapter 6 : Easy Harmonica Lessons - How to Play the Harmonica by JP Allen

Welcome to the #1 blues harmonica channel on YouTube! Here you'll find literally hundreds of teaching videos, for beginners and more experienced players alike.

Blues is the most popular musical style played on the harmonica, as well as the most effective. Before trying it, you should know the basic harmonica technique described in "How to Get Started on the Diatonic Harmonica," under Related eHow's. You also need a hole diatonic harmonica. Getting a Feel for the Blues Listen to as many blues recordings as possible. Pay attention to the chord changes and try to anticipate them. Try to single out the different instruments. Clap your hands and tap your feet to the rhythm of the songs. Emphasize the 2 and the 4 shuffle rhythm , which is 1 and the2 and the3 and the4 and the Bending the Blues Draw on hole 4 of your harmonica, breathing deeply; avoid sucking. Say the vowel "e" "yeeee Change your mouth and tongue position to say the vowel "u" "eyuuu This should lower the pitch of your tone. Go back between "e" and "u. This is called "bending" notes, a technique essential for playing the blues. Try bending on holes 5 and 3 of your instrument. Try it on all 10 holes and note the differences in how difficult they are to bend. Close both hands around the harmonica while still drawing. Open the right hand and note the "waaah" sound - another nice bluesy effect. Practice opening and closing your hand to create the effect. Try the bending technique while blowing - rather than drawing - on different holes. Note how much more difficult it is to create the effect. Draw on the second hole of your harmonica. On a harmonica in the key of G major, that would be the C note, the first note of your five-note scale. Draw on the third hole, bending the note down a half-tone; this would be Eb, the second note on the scale. Blow on the fourth hole F , the third note. Draw on the fourth hole G , the fourth note. Draw on the fifth hole Bb , the fifth note. Blow on the sixth hole, the octave of the first note. Practice the blues scale up and down until you can hit all of the notes clearly. This is called "crossed position" as opposed to "straight" harmonica, where the harmonica you use is in the same key as the song C. Practice bending notes on holes 4 and 5. These are the bends most frequently used in blues. The Blues Progression On your G harmonica, play the C-major chord draw on holes counting four times four bar measures. Play the F-major chord blow on holes two times. Play the C-major chord again two times. Play the G7 chord draw on holes one time. Play the F-major chord one time. Play the C-major chord two times. Practice this progression, playing along with different blues recordings using harmonicas in different keys. Put all the elements together: Start tapping your feet, put your harmonica to your mouth and go. Tip Note that you can bend notes only down, not up, on any hole. This is not due to any lack of technique, but to the way the reeds of the harmonica are laid out. Keep that in mind when playing melodies. Though blues songs may be played in different keys, the progression will remain the same. Practice in different keys. About the Author This article was written by a professional writer, copy edited and fact checked through a multi-point auditing system, in efforts to ensure our readers only receive the best information. To submit your questions or ideas, or to simply learn more, see our about us page:

Chapter 7 : How to Play the Blues on the Harmonica | Our Pastimes

Almost everyone has owned a common 10 hole diatonic harmonica. Learning to play it can be very frustrating. The instructions that came with your harmonica attempt to show you how to play a few simple songs.

C E Each hole is the same interval here, a perfect fifth from its key of C counterpart; on the diatonic scale, a G is a perfect fifth from C. The interval between keys can be used to find the note layout of any standard diatonic. This provides a unique wavering or warbling sound created by the two reeds being slightly out of tune with each other and the difference in their subsequent waveforms interacting with each other its beat. The Asian version, which can produce all 12 semitones, is used often in East Asian rock and pop music. Orchestral harmonicas are primarily designed for use in ensemble playing. Orchestral melody harmonica[edit] There are eight kinds of orchestral melody harmonica; the most common are the horn harmonicas often found in East Asia. These consist of a single large comb with blow-only reed-plates on the top and bottom. Each reed sits inside a single cell in the comb. One version mimics the layout of a piano or mallet instrument, with the natural notes of a C diatonic scale in the lower reed plate and the sharps and flats in the upper reed plate in groups of two and three holes with gaps in between like the black keys of a piano. Horn harmonicas are available in several pitch ranges, with the lowest pitched starting two octaves below middle C and the highest beginning on middle C itself; they usually cover a two- or three-octave range. They are chromatic instruments and are usually played in an East Asian harmonica orchestra instead of the " push-button " chromatic harmonica that is more common in the European and American tradition. Their reeds are often larger, and the enclosing "horn" gives them a different timbre, so that they often function in place of a brass section. In the past, they were referred to as horn harmonicas. The other type of orchestral melodic harmonica is the polyphonia, though some are marked "chromatica". These have all twelve chromatic notes laid out on the same row. In most cases, they have both blow and draw of the same tone, though the No. Chord harmonica[edit] The chord harmonica has up to 48 chords: It is laid out in four-note clusters, each sounding a different chord on inhaling or exhaling. Typically each hole has two reeds for each note, tuned to one octave of each other. However, less expensive models often have only one reed per note. Quite a few orchestra harmonicas are also designed to serve as both bass and chord harmonica, with bass notes next to chord groupings. There are also other chord harmonicas, such as the Chordomonica which operates similar to a chromatic harmonica , and the junior chord harmonicas which typically provide six chords. The first three holes play a major chord on blow and draw, with and without the slide. Holes 2, 3, and 4 play a diminished chord; holes 3, 4, and 5 play a minor chord; and holes 4, 5, and 6 play an augmented, for a total of sixteen chords. This pattern is repeated starting on hole 5, a whole step higher; and again starting on hole 9, for a total of 48 chords. ChengGong harmonica[edit] The ChengGong harmonica [2] has a main body, and a sliding mouthpiece. The body is a hole diatonic harmonica that ranges from B2 to D6 covering 3 octaves. Its hole mouthpiece can slide along the front of the harmonica, which gives numerous chord choices and voicings seven triads, three 6th chords, seven 7th chords, and seven 9th chords, for a total of 24 chords. As well, it is capable of playing single-note melodies and double stops over a range of three diatonic octaves. Unlike conventional harmonicas, blowing and drawing produce the same notes because its tuning is closer to the note layout of a typical Asian tremolo harmonica or the Polyphonias. Pitch pipe[edit] The pitch pipe is a simple specialty harmonica that provides a reference pitch to singers and other instruments. Chromatic pitch pipes, which are used by singers and choirs, give a full chromatic note octave. Pitch pipes are also sold for string players, such as violinists and guitarists; these pitch pipes usually provide the notes corresponding to the open strings. This technique can be accomplished in a number of ways. The most common way is to change how the harmonica is held. For example, the vibrato effect can be achieved by opening and closing the hands around the harmonica very rapidly. The vibrato might also be achieved via rapid glottal vocal fold opening and closing, especially on draws inhalation simultaneous to bending, or without bending. This obviates the need for cupping and waving the hands around the instrument during play. This gives a quick pitch-alternating technique that is slightly more than vibrato and achieves the same aural effect on sustained notes, albeit by using two different tones

instead of varying the amplitude of one. In addition to the 19 notes readily available on the diatonic harmonica, players can play other notes by adjusting their embouchure and forcing the reed to resonate at a different pitch. This technique is called bending, a term possibly borrowed from guitarists, who literally bend a string to subtly change the pitch. Bending also creates the glissandos characteristic of much blues harp and country harmonica playing. Bends are essential for most blues and rock harmonica due to the soulful sounds the instrument can bring out. The "wail" of the blues harp typically requires bending. In the s, Howard Levy developed the over bending technique also known as "overblowing" and "overdrawing". Over Bending, combined with bending, allowed players to play the entire chromatic scale. In addition to playing the diatonic harmonica in its original key, it is also possible to play it in other keys by playing in other "positions" using different keynotes. Using just the basic notes on the instrument would mean playing in a specific mode for each position. For example the Mixolydian mode root note is the second draw or third blow , produces a major dominant seventh key that is frequently used by blues players because it contains the harmonically rich dominant seventh note, while the Dorian mode root note is four draw produces a minor dominant seventh key. Another technique, seldom used to its full potential, is altering the size of the mouth cavity to emphasize certain natural overtones. When this technique is employed while playing chords, care must be taken in overtone selection as the overtones stemming from the non-root pitch can cause extreme dissonance. Harmonica players who amplify their instrument with microphones and tube amplifiers , such as blues harp players, also have a range of techniques that exploit properties of the microphone and the amplifier, such as changing the way the hands are cupped around the instrument and the microphone or rhythmically breathing or chanting into the microphone while playing. Blues and folk players refer to the instrument with a range of less common names, including hand reed, Mississippi saxophone, licking stick, pocket sax, toe pickle, tin sandwich, ten-holed tin-can tongue twister, blues burger, harpoon, moothie, and French harp. History[edit] The harmonica was developed in Europe in the early part of the 19th century. Free-reed instruments like the Chinese sheng were fairly common in Asia since ancient times. Christian Friedrich Ludwig Buschmann is often cited as the inventor of the harmonica in , but other inventors developed similar instruments at the same time. These instruments were made for playing classical music. Early instruments[edit] The harmonica first appeared in Vienna, where harmonicas with chambers were sold before see also Anton Reinlein and Anton Haeckl. Richter tuning, invented by Joseph Richter who also is credited with inventing the blow and draw mechanism , was created in and was eventually adopted nearly universally. In Germany, violin manufacturer Mr. Meisel from Klingenthal bought a harmonica with chambers Kanzellen at the Exhibition in Braunschweig in He and the ironworker Langhammer copied the instruments in the Graslitz three miles away; by they had produced hundreds of harmonicas. Many others followed in Germany and also nearby in what would later become Czechoslovakia. In , Johann Wilhelm Rudolph Glier also began making harmonicas. In , Christian Messner, a cloth maker and weaver from Trossingen , copied a harmonica his neighbour had brought from Vienna. He had such success that eventually his brother and some relatives also started to make harmonicas. From onwards, his nephew Christian Weiss was also involved in the business. By , there were at least three harmonica-making businesses: Seydel is still in business. Owing to competition between the harmonica factories in Trossingen and Klingenthal, machines were invented to punch the covers for the reeds. In , Matthias Hohner, a clockmaker from Trossingen, started producing harmonicas. Eventually he became the first to mass-produce them. He used a mass-produced wooden comb that he had made by machine-cutting firms. By , he began supplying the United States. By the s, the diatonic harmonica had largely reached its modern form. Other types followed soon thereafter, including the various tremolo and octave harmonicas. By the late 19th century, harmonica production was a big business, having evolved into mass production. New designs were still developed in the 20th century, including the chromatic harmonica , first made by Hohner in , the bass harmonica, and the chord harmonica. In the 21st century, radical new designs have been developed and are still being introduced into the market, such as the Suzuki Overdrive, Hohner XB, and the ill-fated Harrison B-Radical. Diatonic harmonicas were designed primarily for playing German and other European folk music and have succeeded well in those styles. Over time, the basic design and tuning proved adaptable to other types of music such as the blues , country , old-time and more. The harmonica was a success almost

from the very start of production, and while the center of the harmonica business has shifted from Germany, the output of the various harmonica manufacturers is still very high. The United States had two significant harmonica manufacturers, and both were based in Union, New Jersey. One was Magnus Harmonica Corporation, whose founder Finn Magnus is credited with the development of plastic harmonica reeds. The other was Wm. Both companies ceased harmonica production. The only recent American contender in the harmonica market was Harrison Harmonicas, which folded in July. It was announced soon thereafter that the rights to the Harrison design had been sold to another company to finish production of orders already placed. Recently, responding to increasingly demanding performance techniques, the market for high-quality instruments has grown. Europe and North America[edit] Some time before Hohner began manufacturing harmonicas in , he shipped some to relatives who had emigrated to the United States. President Abraham Lincoln carried a harmonica in his pocket, [5] and harmonicas provided solace to soldiers on both the Union and Confederate sides of the American Civil War. Frontiersmen Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid played the instrument, and it became a fixture of the American musical landscape. Harmonicas were heard on a handful of recordings in the early s, generally labeled as a "mouth organ". The first jazz or traditional music recordings of harmonicas were made in the U. Recordings known at the time as "race records", intended for the black market of the southern states, included solo recordings by DeFord Bailey and duo recordings with a guitarist Hammie Nixon, Walter Horton, or Sonny Terry. Hillbilly styles were also recorded, intended for white audiences, by Frank Hutchison, Gwen Foster and several other musicians. There are also recordings featuring the harmonica in jug bands, of which the Memphis Jug Band is the most famous. But the harmonica still represented a toy instrument in those years and was associated with the poor. It is also during those years that musicians started experimenting with new techniques such as tongue-blocking, hand effects and the most important innovation of all, the second position, or cross-harp.

Chapter 8 : Breakthrough Blues Harmonica

A website for blues harmonica students, featuring videos and tabs by Adam Gussow, a Mississippi-based pro and one of the world's best-known blues harp teachers.

C chord blowing holes 1,2,3,4 on a C harmonica C chord drawing holes 1,2,3 on an F harmonic Now you may ask why you would want to do this. You can "make" other notes by bending lowering the pitch of some notes on a harmonica. It sounds terrific and is what you normally hear when a song includes a harmonica. On the lower holes holes 1 through 6 with 3 being easiest you can fairly easily bend the draw notes. Therefore in second position you have draw notes available to "make" the missing notes you need. The higher pitched the harmonica the easier it is to bend and control the draw notes on the lower holes G is the lowest pitch harp and F sharp is the highest.. You will be playing in C with an F harp. Before you harmonica players start writing me It is much more difficult to learn and control though. Some blues players Jimmy Reed for example - See sample below do much the same sound as crossed harp by bending the blow notes on the top end of the harmonica playing straight harp in the same key as the song. It is almost impossible to bend and control the blow notes on the bottom end of a harmonica. If you want to learn to bend the high blow notes, choose a harmonica in a low key G or A for instance and use holes 8, 9, and If you try hard enough and long enough you will succeed. It took me years to master it. I know of no way to teach you to bend notes. I do know that if you keep trying it will come. Technically the pitch is changed by altering the direction the air enters the hole and strikes the reed. It has nothing to do with pressure or how hard you blow. Learning to play the harmonica is very much like learning to talk. No one can teach you how to make the sounds but you learn by trial and error. After you become proficient at playing the harmonica, it is very much like singing. You think what you want to hear and it just comes out! How do I learn to play single notes one hole Just like learning to bend notes, this comes with practice and is impossible to teach. The secret is learning to control a small stream of air into the harmonica. Similiar laws of physics apply as to playing a flute. If you play long enough it will come! Just be patient and keep trying. What kind of harmonicas should I buy? Although several manufacturers make harmonicas, the standard is made by M. Also the insert is plastic instead of wood. Plastic seals well and does not swell when wet. A harmonica with a swollen wooden insert can be a painful experience to play. What keys do I need to buy? It is nice to own all 12 keys. This covers all the normal keys that bands usually use. How do I take care of a harmonica? Avoid eating while playing. I clean them by soaking in warm water with denture tablets and rinsing under the tap. Many harp players "buy their harps a drink" while playing. A little ethyl alcohol vodka? A dirty harp is a culture dish for growing germs! If you carry your harps in your pocket be careful not to sit on them! The covers are very easy to bend and bent covers destroy the resonance. What can I do if my harmonica gets out of tune? If it is still out of tune after cleaning I recommend buying a new one. Give the old one to a kid after cleaning it again and sterilizing it with alcohol. Repairs, although possible, seldom give good results. How long will a harmonica last? Generally a harmonica will last for years. It is according to how well you clean it and how hard you play it. All of them will eventually get out of tune from metal fatigue to the reeds. I have "blown out" many harmonicas in one night from extremely hard bending of the notes. The easiest way to learn is to listen to and play along with recordings. Turntables and cassette players all analog players are famous for not running at standard speed. Some expensive turntables have speed correction, so this can be corrected. Thankfully we now have digital recording, so CDs are usually best for practicing. With your computer you can even correct or change tuning on CDs! Play a recording at half speed to figure out those intricate licks! Show up at the local jam session or fiddlers convention with harmonicas in your pocket The other musicians will seldom be tuned standard! If you want to play along be prepared to ask them to tune standard! You might want to invest in a guitar tuner to help them! I have always loved playing Bluegrass and Gospel music. At first you may have difficulty determining the song key. If you are playing with a band, simply ask the key. With a keyboard or guitar you can slide until you find the right key. At any rate this will come easily with a little practice. Just remember that the harmonica you want to use is 5 half tones above the song key! Get out your harmonicas and go on to some practice licks music is in tune.

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About Harmonicas: The harmonica is one of the most fun and recognizable instruments, used worldwide in nearly every musical genre, most notably in blues, American folk music, jazz, country and rock 'n' roll.