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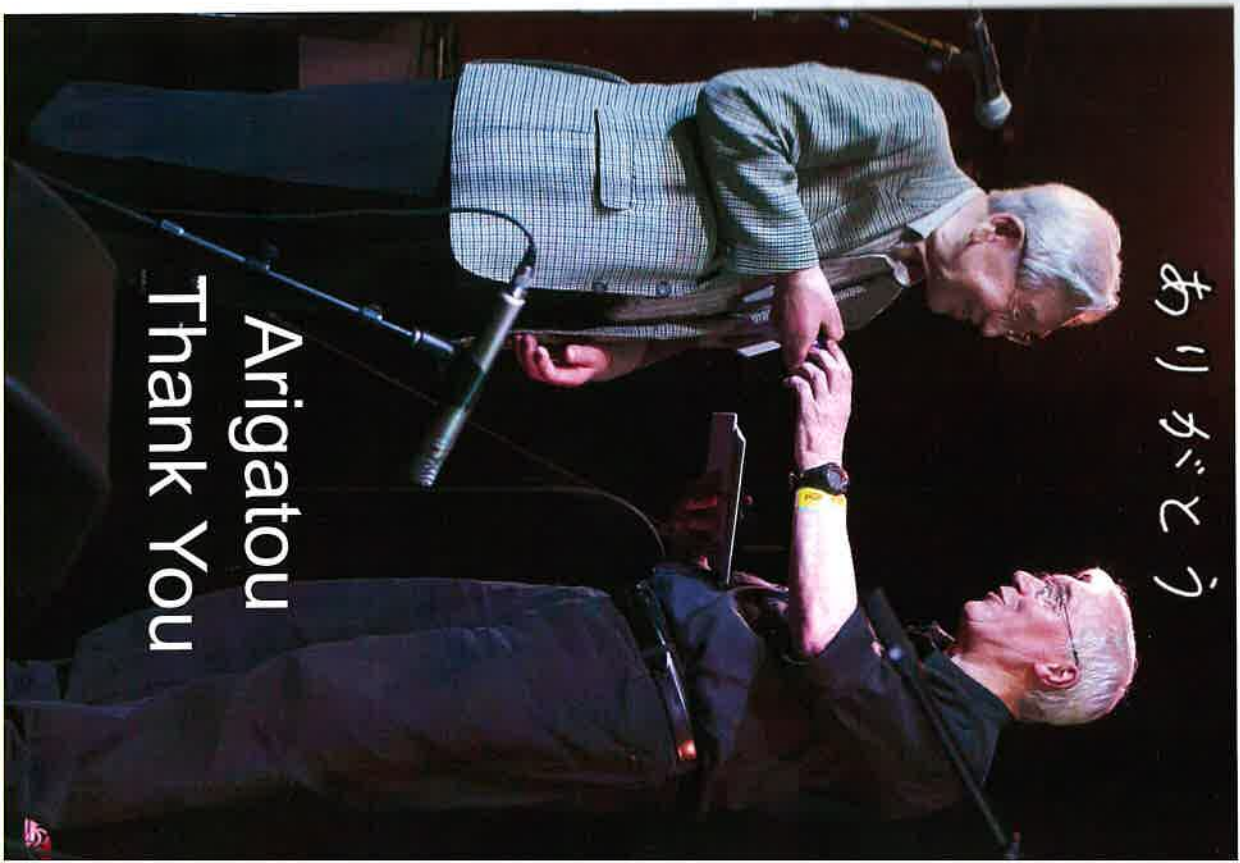
WORLD

The UK's only dedicated Harmonica Magazine
www.harmonica.co.uk Dec/Jan 2016

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Thank You



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HARMONICA WORLD

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COPY

The copy/advertising deadlines fall on the last days of Dec, Feb, April, June, Aug and Oct - four weeks prior to the publication date. Items for consideration for publication should be no more than 900 words, preferably type-written, on disc or by email. All images need to be 300dpi at full size. No material will be returned. The editor's decision is final in all matters relating to this publication. All contents are copyright. No part of them may be reproduced in any form without prior permission and *Harmonica World* and the NHL must be acknowledged. The NHL tries to ensure accuracy, but accepts no responsibility for any contributors' errors, misrepresentations or opinions. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the NHL. Members of the NHL committee and persons involved in producing this magazine and their families are not eligible to enter *Harmonica World* competitions unless the rules explicitly state otherwise.

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YOUR EDITOR

The annual list of members has not been included in this issue. If anyone needs details of members near them, please contact David Hambley, see P 39.

All annual memberships are due for renewal by January, 2016.

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If we have your email address you will get an email reminder. If we don't have your latest email or if you renew by SO, you should have received a renewal reminder with this magazine. If you are in doubt please contact David Hambley and give him your email.
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Renew straight away and save the NHL time and money. Get a friend to join and make the money you pay go further.

Another hard to beat festival with

a sell out Saturday Concert! If you weren't there, read the personal accounts you will find in this magazine and start planning for 28-30 Oct 2016. Thanks to all the people who ran the jam sessions and workshops for diatonic and chromatic players - David Beer [adjudicator] - Keith for the auction, Carli on the door, Russ and John for help with the video recording - the NHL Committee and helpers, Rick Hutchinson, Moses Jones - all the shops and suppliers, the Folk House and you, the members, who turned up and produced the great atmosphere. Let me know if I've forgotten to thank anyone!

We are indebted to Seydel who kindly supported the event by bringing their technical staff and sponsoring Mat Walklate. Suzuki also brought a full product display.

Thanks also to our inspirational presenters and performers who travelled from the USA, Holland, Japan, Slovenia and the UK, far too many to mention individually, whose efforts and performances made the whole weekend such a success.

It was a varied and successful concert but if you missed it you can see much of the concert on YouTube on the NHL channel.
www.youtube.com/trrob

Here is a possible New Year's Resolution: Meet some new players in your area and get to an NHL or other harmonica event.

The AGM was again well attended, both in person and by proxy. The level of interaction and discussion resulted in the meeting being 42 minutes long. In brief, the reports show that finances remain stable with additional income from Gift Aid and advertising. To control festival costs Seydel sponsored one of the concert artists. Hohner could not be present at the festival but Hobboblin stepped in. Annual membership rates will continue to be pegged at the current level.

Other discussions centred on the need for coordination of events throughout the country and thanks to those who organised the various events. The success of the Chromatic weekend has just pushed NHL income over the £25k limit so that annual reporting to the Charities Commission has been delayed while accounts are independently examined. NHL member Dennis Timbers has volunteered to do this.

The current officers were duly re-elected to the same roles with Davina Brazier and Dave Taylor joining after a trial period. Eva Hurt and Liam Ward will continue to attend Skype meetings with a view to joining the committee later. Ben Hewlett agreed to continue as Chairman.

The committee thanked the many people who are already helping the NHL by volunteering for specific tasks or just offering to help at events, especially Dick Powell who looks after education queries.

Contest Results: Oct 2015

- Solo Chromatic*
- 1 Pete Hewitt
 - 2 Shirish Swami
 - 3 Shivang Shastri
 - 3 Vladimir Hrovat

- Solo Chromatic (Youth)*
- 1 Sean Spicer

- Solo Diatonic Blues/Rock*
- 1 Philip Jackson
 - 2 Leonid Titkov
 - 3 Mark Theobald

- Solo Diatonic Blues/Rock (Youth)*
- 1 Sean Spicer

- Solo Diatonic Melodic*
- 1 Neil Warren
 - 2 Mark Theobald
 - 3 Simon Joy

- Solo Diatonic Melodic (Youth)*
- 1 Sean Spicer
 - 2 Rebecca Willoughby
 - 3 Maisie Herbert

- Solo Jazz*
- 1 Patrick Byrne
 - 2 Pete Hewitt
 - 3 Leonid Titkov

- Class 2 Duo*
- 1 Joff Watkins & Mike Rasmussen
 - 2 Vladimir Hrovat & Maja Nemanic

- Class 3 Trio*
- 1 S Perme, M Vidic & P Jeršin
 - 2 Neil Warren, Peter & Kay Noble
 - 3 D Hrabric, A Primc & V Bogataj

- Class 4 Group*
- 1 P Jeršin, V Bogataj, D Hrabric, M Vidic, A Primc & S Perme

- Class 5 Band*
- 1 Sorarmonica - A Primc, M Vidic, V Hrovat, V Bogataj, P Jeršin, D Hrabric, S Perme & M Nemanic

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A Wee Drop of Scotch

by George Current.

As well as the NHL magazine, Harmonica World, dropping through your door, December also brings Christmas. Near the end of January in Scotland is Burns Night and somewhere in the middle is New Year.

Things have changed a bit over the years but when I first started work, Christmas was a normal working day in Scotland.

Usually employees got the choice of Christmas Day off and two days off at New Year, or work Christmas Day and have three days at New Year. Most opted for three days at New Year. This attitude to Christmas was largely due to the Protestant Church and dated back to the time of the Reformation in Scotland.

Things have changed a bit over the last fifty years or so and now Christmas is as big, if not bigger than New Year, in Scotland. Certainly in Edinburgh there's a Christmas Market and carnival atmosphere over the period.

Whether you're religious or not there's a lot of great music to be found in the church and much of it is diatonic which makes it particularly suitable for the Tremolo Harmonica.

It's worth digging out that old book of Christmas Carols. You, and others around you, might be surprised how good they sound on a Tremolo.

Burns Night, near the end of January, is yet another excuse to get the mouth organ out. At the first recorded Burns Supper in 1801 the haggis wasn't piped in, it was 'fiddled' in. No reason why it can't be a mouth organ!

Get a few friends round with their instruments and have a mini-Burns Supper. A word of warning though about haggis and harmonicas, rinse your mouth out before you play! Robert Burns wrote and collected many tunes. A lot of music that is still being played today was saved by Burns.

On his travels round the country as an excise man he didn't carry a smart phone to record music, he could only jot it down on a piece of paper. He must have been a pretty good musician to be able to write down words and music just as he heard them.

The harmonica wouldn't have appeared in Scotland until some thirty or forty years after Burns died. I wonder if he would have carried one around with him had it been around then? I reckon he would have been more of a 'Blues Harp' guy though!

New Year is really still the most important celebration in Scotland at this time of year though - a time to 'ring out the old and ring in the new'.

The tradition of *first footing*, being the first foot over someone's door in the New Year, still goes on but is much harder now as friends and family tend to live much further

apart, but there's no shortage of partying and my tremolos have had plenty of use over the years around this time.

New Year in Scotland is usually a time for reflection and a time to look forward.

In Robert Burns' poem *To a Mouse* - which he wrote after turning over a mouse's nest while ploughing a field and watching the mouse scurry away - the last verse could easily sum up thoughts at New Year:-

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me

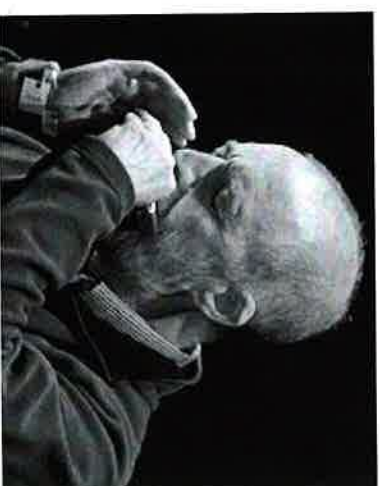
The present only toucheth thee:

But, Och! I backward cast my e'e,

On prospects drear!

An' forward, tho' I canna see,

I guess an' fear!



When Scottish Regiments were abroad over New Year it was not uncommon for the pipers to come through the barracks playing at midnight. One of the many tunes that would have been played was 'Happy We've Been All Together'.

This tune goes back to at least the eighteen hundreds and it's the tune I've picked for this month since the New Year is not that far away now. For the sound file I'm using a 'Hohner Big Valley' tremolo in the key of 'D' for this fairly simple tune.

Happy We've Been All Together

Traditional

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year everyone!

A Rookie's Tale from Copenhagen

Janne Lorenzen.

Since I bought a harmonica for my little daughter 2 years ago, and 'stole' it from her, I have been totally hooked on playing that harp! It means a lot to me, and I have been eager to meet other harp enthusiasts.

My friends and family, well they are just not that into talking about Hohner versus Seydel! I know a few harmonica players in Copenhagen, Denmark, where I live, but I dreamt of a bigger event, a whole weekend of nothing but sharing this crazy passion!

Thank God for the Internet!

I found a website, that summed up the (short) list of harmonica events all over the world. I was thrilled to read that the next one, the NHL weekend in Bristol, was coming up soon!

I had come across the NHL before, watching great gala concert performances by Lee Sankey etc. on YouTube, so I trusted that it would be a festival of high quality.

So I travelled to Bristol, very excited, and a bit anxious about not knowing anyone there.

Fortunately I met Mac from Jersey on the bus from the airport (his hat with guitar badges gave him away!), and friendly as he was, I had already got a great feeling about the whole thing.

This good vibe continued all weekend, from being warmly greeted by the 2 busy NHL ladies at the Folk House front desk, to the saying goodbye Sunday night at the Bristol Hotel, way too late, after another fantastic jam night!

The workshops, the late night jams and talks at the hotel - a crucial outlet after the inspirational workshops, where you listen more than play yourself.

The amazing concert on Saturday night! The kindness and openness of all the people that organize the event, and the many nice people, who just like me, love that harp! The jamming with a mix of brave beginners and very experienced and great players, not afraid to share the spotlight!

All of that, I will cherish when I feel a little alone with my harmonica addiction....

Thank you NHL, for creating this opportunity. I hope to be back!



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HARMONICA

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My first festival: Sam Wilkinson.

For many years, I've been thinking about going to the Festival, but it always coincides with half term, when I often go away with the family. Earlier this year my wife and I were saying how we'd like to spend some time in Bath... and so the seed of a cunning plan was sown! As a consequence, I arranged to go to the festival and then meet up in with the family in Bath afterwards. Result!

The train journey down to Bristol from the Wirral was pleasant enough, but naturally I didn't know what to expect when I arrived at the Folk House. Any fears soon vanished as I received a friendly greeting whilst picking up my wristbands at the Folk House.

After buying a cup of tea, I bumped into Azza. I had met him at his event in High Wycombe in the summer and immediately I felt very much at home. This became the theme of the weekend - being able to use the line "mind if I join you?" and then get straight into talking harmonicas!

Friday evening started with the AGM (no bells and whistles - an AGM is an AGM is an AGM!) which let me put faces to the names in the magazines. Next came the blues jam led by the amazing Peter Madcat Ruth.

Players of all abilities had a go and what quickly became clear was the appreciation and respect

shown for each other's playing - there were plenty of nods of appreciation and yells of 'yeah'!

So, to the Saturday workshops and the choice was really impressive. I've never spent a minute's thought on other harmonica types and styles other than blues, so I was happy to broaden my horizons, starting with Matt Walklate's chromatic demonstration and then Hisako Yamaguchi's Japanese tremolo playing; both were really interesting and downright awesome. I've tried a chromatic but always find myself back with the diatonic - perhaps it's time to dust it down again...

The evening Gala concert was wonderful and I could write a page about each performance, but for me the most impressive was Hermine Deurloo playing jazz chromatic, and then giving it some in the blues jam at the end. The most interesting act of the evening was the Slovenian harmonica octet Sorarmonica with their version of Ravel's Bolero. It was so cleverly done, with all sorts of weird and wonderful looking harmonicas!

Following that, jamming in the hotel lounge was great fun and it allowed us to mix and do what we all like doing! I lasted out until about 2am and welcomed the end of BST with an extra hour of slumber! We weren't the only folks puffing and panting at the weekend - there was also the Bristol and Bath marathon and the

hotel was by the starting line, with a shouty man with his PA outside my window! Now, I don't doubt that 'Eye of the Tiger' is one of the best ever rock tracks, but when it's played at full pelt outside your window for the eighth time on a Sunday morning, then one's affinity with it begins to wane!

The workshops on Sunday were as good, despite some very tired looking fellow players and workshop leaders! The afternoon was the open concert in which anyone could take part.

I persuaded our Danish member (Jannel) to do an improvised solo together, with me using a low C harp to create a rhythm, and by all accounts, it went very well!

My highlight of the weekend was Madcat. I've been trying to get a solo blues set together for some time and he really gave me the inspiration to drive things forward.

Percussion is an important part of his performances. He incorporates all sorts of rhythmic sounds.

I'm now looking to buy a hi-hat and I've even checked our frying pan to see how close we are to needing a new one! I'll stop short of buying a squeaky shark, though!

Madcat replaces his bottom hi-hat cymbal with a frying pan with no handle and a hole drilled in the middle! The effect is a solid tap, a bit like a metronome which you can hear clearly when he is performing. Check out the videos on the NHL YouTube site or festival DVD.



So what did I get from the weekend? In addition to what I've already said, I find being a harp player can be quite a lonely pastime - I've attended many open mics and never come across another harp player, so it served as therapy by being amongst like-minded people! Plus, I didn't realise what a vibrant and happening place Bristol is!

So, if you've thought about attending, then I really urge you to go for it next year! I'm already making plans... I'm told a family break in Cheltenham is delightful in the autumn!

Editor - Sam Wilkinson is looking at getting harmonica players together somewhere in the North West of England - Manchester/Liverpool... please contact him if you're interested in helping to make something happen - email him: ironmad@horvience.com

ALL ABOUT THE BASS: Dror Adler presented by Brendan Power.

The bass harmonica is not the most glamorous member of the harmonica family, but it has a fabulous earthy tone and a certain brute charm.

If you've ever tried one it's hard not to get hooked on the grunty sound of those big fat reeds! Even a simple note or two from the bass harmonica can enhance a track immensely.

I bought one many years ago and, though I never became adept, it has often come in handy for recording sessions.

The main reason I never got around it easily was because of its cumbersome structure. The traditional bass harmonica is a twin-deck instrument, with the C scale on the bottom deck and the C# scale on the top. The only way to play it is to jump around between the two decks.

Some specialists get very good at doing this, but it still looks ungainly and only allows for staccato playing.

Until now, that is. I have recently scaled up my new TwinHarmonca System design to radically upgrade the bass harmonica playing experience. I combine the two decks behind a bridging air-shifting unit and slider. This reduces

the number of mouth holes by half and enables previously impossible techniques, such as legato semitone playing, slider trills etc.

After lots of tweaking and testing I've customised my slider/mouthpiece unit so it can be retro-fitted to all the popular Hohner and Suzuki bass harmonicas.

Here it is on the classic Hohner 265 double-reed bass:



Spending so much time working on bass harmonicas has brought me into closer contact with an unsung hero of harmonica innovation: Dror Adler, of the famous Adler Trio.

I got talking with Dror at the Seoul Harmonica Festival in August, and it was a real revelation to learn of his fascinating history with bass and chord harmonicas, as well as microphones.

You may be surprised to learn that all the current bass harmonica models from Hohner and Suzuki are heavily derivative of design ideas that Dror Adler pioneered. Here is what I learned.

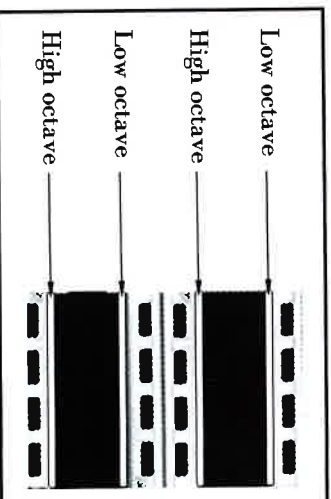


Dror's story in his own words:

Changing the Bass Structure

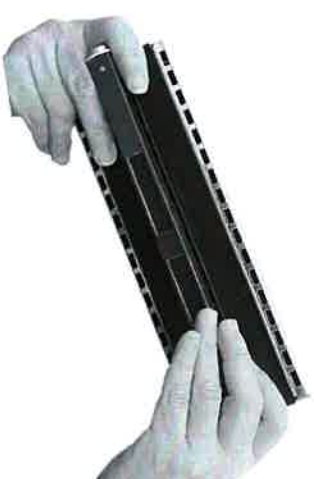
In the beginning of the 90s I was looking for a better sounding microphone solution for the bass harmonica which will also be nicer and more elegant.

I realized that if I want to use one line of microphones in the middle of the instrument - I will have to change its structure. Until that time, the Hohner and Suzuki Bass harmonicas had the same settings of reedplates, illustrated here:



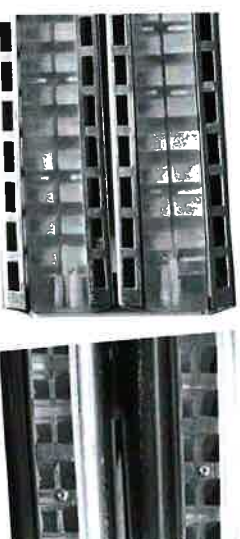
Putting a mic in the middle would make one deck sound very bassy and the other not at all. So, I took the punishment of taking out all the reeds of the upper deck, and putting them back on the other sides of the reedplates, and now I had the world's one and only bass harmonica with the low octave of both decks in the middle!

The reward was enormous! Immediately I built a new device, using an elegant anodized aluminium profile which contained 3 condenser capsules. It was light, beautiful, and sounded amazing!



Before coming to Japan in 1995 I have made a plexiglass body for the Bass harmonica using a milling machine. I also removed the metal mouthpiece of the instrument because I found it useless and causing only trouble. I suggested that to Hohner and Suzuki many years ago.

I told them that the bass body should be exactly like a diatonic's body. Only now, on their last model, Hohner made it without a mouthpiece. I guess Suzuki will have to do that as well, as it is inevitable.



Notice that in my plexiglass bass body, I put screws in the places there used to be screws for holding the mouthpiece. That is because Jacob, our bass player used them for so many years as reference. It helped him know where he was.

In Japan we performed with all our new novelties - the special microphones, and the plexiglass bass harmonica - and sounded better than ever. We also performed in Hamamatsu, the home city of Suzuki.

Mr. M. Suzuki the chairman and the Suzuki people who watched our performance were amazed and very interested in our novelties.

We were invited to the Suzuki factory for a tour, and then Mr. M. Suzuki asked me to explain to him how we achieved such a good sound, especially from the bass harmonica.

I decided to reveal my secrets as I knew that these innovations are not worth the effort and the expense involved in patenting them.

You can see in this rare video clip how I explain it to Suzuki people and Mr. M. Suzuki asking questions about it:

www.tinyurl.com/AdlerBass

After a short time Suzuki changed the structure of their bass harmonicas to have the low octave of both decks in the middle, and built a microphone on my concept, only they used dynamic capsules.

Most of the harmonica groups who used to play a Hohner basses moved to play the new Suzuki Bass with the microphone.

Tellingly, Hohner has now followed Suzuki in copying Dror's arrangement of the reedplates on their new bass harmonicas. Here is the text from their website:

"The lower of each pair of octave-tuned reeds is located on the inner rows of the instrument, ensuring that high and low ranges are equidistant from one another and thus enabling balanced microphoning".

In addition the new plexiglass-body Hohner basses look remarkably like Dror's mid-90s model:



If you want to read more of Dror's other innovations with chord harmonicas and microphones, go here, on the NHL music page for this magazine:

www.harmonica.co.uk/music/ or download it directly from here: www.harmonica.co.uk/music/DA.pdf

I recommend you do, it's fascinating stuff!

Brendan
www.brendan-power.com
YouTube.com/BrendanPowerMusic

H2015 Saturday Concert



Getting perfect harp tone

by Liam Ward.

Blues fans like to obsess about the sound that professional harmonica players achieve; that big, rich tone the notes take when the harp is in the hands of a master. How are they getting it? It's a great question, and this lesson is for those asking it.

I'm assuming you're *lip-pursing*, (pucker) and you can already get single notes, play a few tunes, and maybe wait a bit of the blues, but you want to improve the fullness of your notes.

It turns out that the terms *lip-pursing* and *puckering* are misleading because, as you'll see, they don't really encapsulate what good technique involves.

Other instruments, such as the trumpet, come with a mouthpiece. Harmonicas don't, so we have to do the work ourselves.

OK, let's get started. Pick a note on the harmonica, say 4 hole blow. Play the note as you usually would, but then push out your lips, as if you were trying to reach something a couple of inches away. Your lips, if you could see them, would look like a goldfish's lips while breathing. Or as a student of mine recently said, *the Mick Jagger look*.



Don't be scared to push out with your lips. Think of putting the harmonica IN, not ON, your lips. The lips create a seal around the harmonica: if you try to play a single note out at the end of tight lips, you will struggle to get a strong single note.

For a beginner, that's fine, but to get a big tone, the harmonica should be inside the lips. If your lips are too 'flat' then you'll struggle to get a good seal on the harmonica, and you'll have to work harder to make the instrument do its job. This is tiring and will also really affect your sound. Ever get breathy or strained sounds? This is likely why.

The jaw should also be lowered, as if you have a hot potato in your mouth. The tongue is slightly raised at the back, but the front is dropped to expand the oral cavity.

All this can be extremely counter-intuitive, especially if you've been using a more restricted embouchure (mouth shape) for a while. It may even feel like a step backwards for a while, as you relearn how to play single notes with better technique. But practise, practise, practise, and you will get it in time.

The aim is for this technique to become second nature when you pick up the harmonica, so that you'll be playing big powerful notes every time. Have fun and keep blowing!

www.LearnTheHarmonica.com

Impressions of the Bristol Festival

by the members of Sorarmonica.

It was very nice and interesting to come from Slovenia for the first time to England. Our feelings are good: meeting nice people, riding our hired car on the 'wrong' side of the roads, nice weather on Sunday - all together - very good!

Our first plan was just to enjoy the festival and take part in the contest. We entered six times: as solo, duo, two trios, sextet and the whole octet. We were pleasantly surprised about the way of competitions were run. After each category was finished, the main judge explained everybody's best points and gave some suggestions. When the results were announced we were very satisfied with our three times *Players of the year*, one second and two third places. We were also pleased with the visit and nice reception for our workshops about playing classical music as solo and ensemble.

A high point of our share of the Festival was the honour to be special guests at the Saturday Evening Gala Concert. We enjoyed the reaction of listeners in the sold out Concert Hall in the Bristol Folk House following our interpretation of Ravel's Bolero. The recording engineer, Richard, made great sound for us. Thanks!

On Sunday we gave our second workshop and played in the Open Concert and the nice weather gave us a chance to see many nice

sights in Bristol: The Suspension Bridge, The Observatory, a warm welcome to the Christ Church, Cabot Tower, Old City, and various kinds of boats in the Floating harbour... Andrej (Andrew) was the main walker, so he saw the most. Maja (Maya) was happy to join in a little bit of the Marathon, to make up for missing the International Ljubljana Marathon. Tine (Valentin) was, as usually, our principal photographer, trying to catch any interesting or important moment. Polona was impressed by so positive way of judging at the contest, and later, it was interesting for her to see the young people and night life on Saturday night as well. Dinko was occupied very much about

choosing the incredible big selection of different kinds of music discs in a big Disk House, and bought some too. Mira (Mary) enjoyed seeing tidy streets and buildings, and so many green areas. Vlado (Vladimir) remembers playing the Ave Marias by Gounod and Schubert in the St Mary Church, Redcliffe, alone with his harmonica, for some 'imaginary dream princess'. And our Simona? She enjoyed everything - nice playing, walking, watching - after organizing our trip to Bristol, and then leading our ways and travels successfully until our return home to Slovenia again.

Thanks everybody who made our visit and stay in Bristol so unforgettable!

VH and Sorarmonica.



The images of the festival were taken and donated by Nitin Patel.



See the NHL website for more of them - www.harmonica.co.uk.

An Interview with Mark Hummel
Part 2 - by Ross Garren - Reeds
For The Record.

Short Bio: Mark Hummel started playing harmonica in California in 1970 and he has become one of the top blues harmonica players of his generation.

This is, in part, due to the over thirty recordings he has released since 1985, including the Grammy nominated 2013 Blind Pig CD *Remembering Little Walter*. Mark also created and managed the Blues Harmonica Blowout series of concerts which he started in 1991 and which has become an international event.

These events have featured every major legend (Mayall, Cotton, Musselwhite, etc.) on blues harp as well as almost every player of note on the instrument.

Mark also started his own band, the Blues Survivors, in 1977 with Mississippi Johnny Waters.

By 1984 Hummel began a life of non-stop touring of the US, Canada and Europe, which he still continues at least 130-150 days out of each year.

Hummel has toured or recorded with blues legends Charles Brown, Charlie Musselwhite, Lowell Fulson, Billy Boy Arnold, Carey Bell, Lazy Lester, Brownie McGhee, Eddie Taylor, Luther Tucker and Jimmy Rogers. See www.MarkHummel.com.

Ross: How about differences between recording and live?

Mark: Those are two completely different worlds. One thing I used to always do is use a small amp, like a Princeton, in the studio. I probably used the Princeton for about the first eight years in the studio.

I've used a lot of amps but eventually I started using the *Bassman* and on the most recent record, a *2x12 Silvertone*, both bigger amps.

I have a little 1x8 amp called the *Hurricane*, which I used on *BackPorch Music*, and it sounded really good.

On the Johnny Dyer record, *Rolling Fork*, I wired my Princeton and Bassman together.

The thing people don't realize is that bigger amps have much more bass response, so by wiring them together, you get both and it's pretty killer. I thought it would be interesting to try, and I only used it on that one record, but it turned out great.

Things will sound different in different studios, so I just keep experimenting. So much of what I've learned is just trial and error!

When you put something on tape, it becomes permanent, that's the nerve-racking part. If you're live on a gig, other than someone YouTubeing it, it's gone. That's where preparation really helps.

Sometimes I go in more prepared than others. Like chromatic - sometimes I really mess up on chromatic; sometimes I don't have my ideas quite as in focus.

A lot of times when I go into the studio I come up with things that I've never really performed before. It all depends! On the last album I went in with about half of it really prepared and half of it, my originals. I was totally finishing up by the time we got in.

The weird thing about the studio is that you never know if the things that are super prepared will come off as well as things that you totally improvise on the spot. You kind of need a little of each. The studio is really like gambling!

When we recorded that Johnny Dyer Muddy Waters tribute record, *Rolling Fork*, that's one of the records I'm most proud of.

We were very prepared, and had a number of musicians on it, including two guys who had played with Muddy, Paul Oscher and Francis Clay, in addition to Charles Wheel, Rusty Zinn, Bob Welsh, Marty Dodson, and Steve Wolf.

It was really a mix of musicians and I was producing it and I had to find the right spots for the guys.

I was gassed with how it turned out. It really is like gambling, you just never know how it will turn out!

RG: Any advice on the technical aspect of recording harmonica?

MH: Anything analog is going to sound best. If you can put stuff on tape, that's a way better way to go.

There are some amazing aspects to *ProTools*, but in terms of sound, I'd have to say tape is best.

I'll play through whatever mic they put in front of me - you'd have to ask Kid Anderson, or someone like that, more on the specifics - but for acoustic playing, I pretty much just play into whatever mic I'm singing through.

If it's a small room, I will use one mic on an amp. And if it's a bigger room, we'll use more mics.

I don't think compression is a good idea. You want to do stuff as real sounding as possible. The same as live.

I don't like compression on a vocal or anything. But I'd have to say the tape thing is big, even though I haven't had access to tape on my recent records.

RG: Any closing thoughts or things you might share about your recent projects?

MH: I was real pleased with the last couple records I've done. The live *Little Walter* record - *Remembering Little Walter* - was a record I both played and produced on.

That was a real hairy experience.

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We had one day and two sets to do it. Unfortunately, it turned out that the monitor guy had unplugged the laptop recording the session and we lost the whole of the first set.

Fortunately, the second set went well enough that we were able to get an entire album out of it. That was a really great album. It was Grammy nominated and won two Blues Awards. I was really proud of how well everyone played on it.

The last album, *The Hustle 1s Really On*, was recorded half in Chicago and half at Kid Anderson's studio and I was really happy with how that turned out. And the new album, I'm really stoked about it, because I think Anson Funderburgh did a great job producing it and I was really happy with how the harmonica sound turned out with an all-original 2x12 1959 Silverstone rig.

RG: How about gear?

MH: I've always changed it up! I'll play an amp three to five years and move on to something else. I still have a Sonny Jr. *Cruncher*, which I really love. I had a couple of different Meteors which I liked, but I have to say I really like the *Cruncher* for a newer amp.

But I really prefer vintage gear. I have a *1961 Concert*, an original *Bassman* I love to death, the *Silverstone* I love, a *Magnatone* with 4x8's, and the *Hurricane* I use on duo gigs with 1x8. And I switch it up all the time. I don't like to have the same sound all the time.



I'm sponsored by Seydel and I generally have Rupert Dyster or Ben Bouman work on my harps.

I have a chromatic guy, Steve Malerbi, who works on my chromatics. It used to be Dick Gardner, but he sent me to Steve when he started slowing down.

I still mostly play Hohner chromatics, but I also play Hering Chromatics, the Suzuki chromatics are a trip, and the Seydel twelve holes are great.

I have a set of Filisko harmonicas that I'll use in the studio if I remember to. I find that I'm most comfortable on the Seydels at this point in time and they stay in tune a lot longer than any kind of Marine Band. But when they go, they go quickly!

Please feel free to write to Ross through the CONTACT page at www.RossGarren.com with any feedback you may have.

Ross Garren is a Seydel and Lone Wolf Blues Company Artist.

Target Notes, Rhythm Hooks, and Essence... Richard Sleigh.

I've been working with a group of harmonica enthusiasts on Tuesday nights, decoding Jimmy Reed solos. Jimmy can be infuriating because he's simple and complicated at the same time.

You can get an idea for yourself in these videos on YouTube.

www.tinyurl.com/ReedOne
www.tinyurl.com/ReedTwo

Some of Jimmy's riff are just plain bizarre. Smuddy drunken riffs that seem to change every time you hit re-play, even when you slow them down.

No matter what you do, Jimmy ends up ahead of you or behind you or some damn thing.

It's like he is thumbing his nose at you going "nyah, nyah, can't catch me, can't catch me..."



You could hang in there and eventually be able to play along with the recording note for note. BUT... Is this the best use of your practice time?

This article focuses on a different goal: how to create your own version of a song or solo by listening for essence instead of details.

This process applies to any artist you are studying and will work with any tools or tabs you have available to use.

It is a way of systematically focusing your attention on three main elements:

- Target notes
- Rhythm hooks
- Essence (the way a solo makes you feel)

Target Notes

How many notes can you get rid of and still recognize the solo?

If you are using tab, see how many notes you can cross off with a pencil?

If you are creating your own tab, just write down the main notes. You can also check your progress by recording yourself.

As you listen for target notes, check out how they relate to the chord progression and get a feel for the peaks and valleys of the solo.

Rhythm Hooks

Now tap along with the phrases you want to learn and listen for rhythm patterns.

When you can tap out a phrase without playing the notes you hear it in a new way.

Which notes are accented? Where are the pauses? How does the timing create tension and release?

Essence

When you get your target notes and rhythm hooks sorted out, you have a stripped down version of the solo that you can remember and play easily. Now you are ready to go for essence.

When you create your stripped down version of a song, a lot of your attention and energy is focused from your neck up. Your brain is working hard at this point. When you go for essence you are now listening for tone and textures and the overall feeling you get from the music.

How can you shape your tone so it carries the feeling you want to express when you play?

At this point you have to listen with more than your brain and your ears.

You do this by moving your attention to your heart and your gut feelings.

Your attention becomes a scanner that moves down below your neck and picks up on the feelings and energy in the rest of your body.

What is your gut feeling about the way you are playing this solo?

What is your heart telling you? Are you swaying with the beat?

You may be surprised at the power in this practice of scanning your body for physical and emotional information.

You can use this technique as you listen and as you play. It gives you much more detailed answers to the question "how does this feel"?

You can use this process to guide you to your own unique creative power source. Then you can play music from the inside out.

Then you will fill in the details of the solo you are working on in a way that feels authentic to you.

This process is not "Instant Harmonica". It takes effort. It is also a never-ending process.

But it is worth it. Your listeners won't know the effort you put into it. They will just think you have a "natural feel" for the music.

Give this a try and let me know if it helps. Thanks!

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NEWS

Philip Achille appeared in a couple of concerts in the London Jazz Festival in November.

Friends of Care Homes have asked if anyone would be willing to play for them in the area that they cover from Watford and St Albans. info@friendsofcarehomes.com or Shirish Swami shirish.swami@gmail.com

6th Annual Harpin' by the Sea Festival and Learn to Play Day 6 February 2016. The Brunswick, 1 Holland Rd, Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF. 10am to 11.00 pm. A full day of workshops - Advanced, Beginners & Intermediate players. Workshops - £25. Darren Causton, Richard Taylor - Jam Session - Evening concert starring Son of Dave and Dave Ferguson, Matt Bezants, Adam Franklin, £15. Advance tickets from www.thebrunswick.net Stuart 07773 270336, or email harpinbythesea@hotmail.co.uk. Updates on www.harpisurgery.com

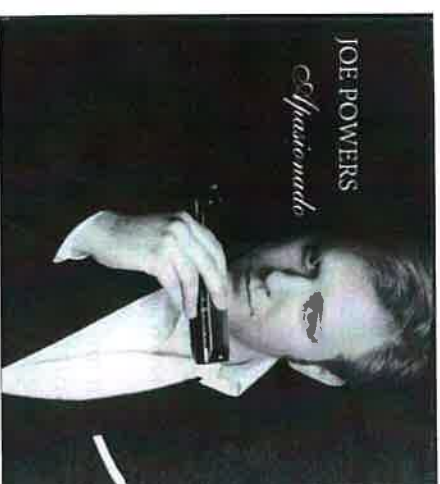
Paul Lamb won the Harmonica category in British Blues Awards 2015 for the third year running and so cannot be nominated again. A chance for the young guns?

Mon 25th Jan 2016 - Tribute to Junior Wells, Bull at Barnes, Thurs 24th March - Cyril Davies Tribute, Eel Pie Club, Twickenham - both featuring **John O'Leary, Alan Glen, Laurie Garman**

REVIEWS

Joe Powers Apasionado
CD Baby and www.joepowers.com
by the editor

Joe Powers is from Portland, Oregon, USA. After graduation he went to Buenos Aires to become a tango dance teacher. He came across the music of Hugo Diaz and was inspired to start playing Tango on harmonica. He is now recognised as a top Tango player with a series of world-wide Tango tours and symphonic concerts in the US and Japan, and beyond.



His latest CD is again recorded in Buenos Aires with local musicians and the result is a performance with all the fire and passion that this style of music deserves. You can imagine couples dancing and the swirling skirts. Not music for a quiet night. The tempos range from seductive to passionate and half the tracks are written by Joe. This is great music to keep your chromatic warm.

Reviews by Norman Darwin.

The Muddbirds - Stumble Trip
(Muddbirds Records)

Anglo-Dutch duo The Muddbirds follow up their acclaimed debut album, *Stick Blues*, with another excellent album featuring the slide guitar work of Rene Tweehuisen and the vocals and harmonica work of Londoner Alan Laws, who makes an immediate impression with his Sonny Terry styled playing on the opener. *Money Talks* and Skip James' *Hard Times* aim for, and get, a much deeper blues sound. The set continues with the combination of slide guitar and harmonica making an original sound that is quite distinctive (sometimes the guitar work has hints of a sitar) and very listenable. Alan's playing is exemplary throughout.

The Husky Tones - *Time For A Change* www.huskytones.com

This four piece UK band has a tough blues-rock sound, drawing on the music of the 60s and 70s and a more traditional approach from time to time, though all the material is original and undeniably modern-sounding. Prominent in the line-up behind feisty vocalist Victoria Bourne is harmonica ace Liam Ward, endlessly inventive in this generally high energy environment, an integral part of the band's approach, riffing away and sharing instrumental breaks with guitarist Chris Harper on a highly recommended release.

Giles Hedley - *Rain Is Such A Lonesome Sound*
www.gileshedley.com

This is Giles the solo bluesman, the UK veteran who supported Son House and Mississippi Fred McDowell back in the 70s, playing the blues Mississippi style, as he has in our annual concert at Bristol. On this CD he is most frequently heard on slide guitar, but there are several numbers with solo or rack style harmonica, which show just what a fine country blues player he is. Giles has a powerful blues sound which should be in your collection.

Eddie Martin's Big Red Radio - *Live In Tuscany* - Blueblood Records - www.eddiemartin.com

London-born Eddie Martin is one of the lesser-known treasures of the UK blues scene. An excellent singer and performer in both acoustic and electric modes - he has also received much acclaim for his unique blues harp playing. On this set, he has adopted a big, mature band sound, with UK and Italian musicians and The Jubilation Gospel Choir of Livorno. He mixes a country blues approach with an accomplished, eclectic sound containing elements of jazz, pop, reggae, Latin sounds and funk to create a fresh approach, whilst keeping his famed rack harmonica playing to the fore for much of the time. Buy this on download, CD or DVD and make Eddie's massive talents even better-known!

Armonauti - *Joggin' Along*

Now I love this release! Armonauti starred at the 2013 Bristol

Harmonica festival and this time they have taken a bunch of mainly folk-blues standards such as *Freight Train* and *San Francisco Bay Blues* and given them the harmonica band treatment (diatonic, chromatic, chord and bass), with just vocals and banjo, guitar or percussion in support. If this doesn't bring a smile to your face, you definitely need to cut down on the botox. Beautifully recorded - listen to *Raboso* where you can clearly hear the bass reeds vibrating - or really, just pick any track at random. Mind you, if you like the swamp-blues, try *Man Without Future*, which should certainly hook you in.

J.J. Appleton & Jason Ricci
Dirty Memory - Old Boy Network
www.jjappleton.com

JJ Appleton plays a resonator guitar and sings in a strong voice, Jason Ricci is an award winning blues harmonica maestro who has not recorded much recently.

This set has the duo helped by a couple of upright bass players, on a fine and very accessible programme of eleven tracks. Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee came to mind a few times, but this set is far more varied. Jason's playing is funky and down-home throughout this mixture of old and new songs - take a listen to his awesomely played and aptly titled *Jason Solo* to understand why he is so highly rated these days.

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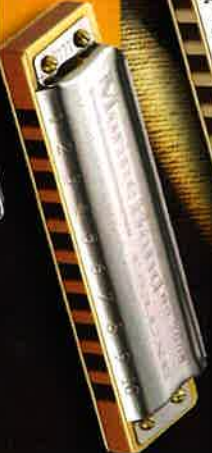
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Buskers Holiday - Tony Eyers.

Last week the book *Busker's Holiday* by Adam Gussow landed on my doorstep. A mighty yarn, with a harmonica playing hero, as we will see...

First however, Adam Gussow. He appeared in the '90s with the Harlem based busking duo Satan and Adam. They left the streets and toured, even making it to Australia. I remember news snippets at the time, but missed their shows. His impact spread via YouTube, starting in 2007. He was amongst the first to combine portable low cost video cameras, informal settings and YouTube to outline the harmonica.

Around two hundred videos later, he's still going. And people are watching, with around thirteen million views so far.

His videos are compelling. He is a grade A player, and understands deeply how the harmonica works.

At a screen with him, you feel like you've shared three beers. His videos appear loosely organised, they are not. He is a highly experienced instructor...

So. He can certainly play harmonica, and talk about it. Can he also write?

Actually, he can. Adam Gussow is also an Associate Professor in English and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, with

a Princeton PhD in English literature. He has published three books already, *Busker's Holiday* is the fourth.

Mackay Chernoff is the main character. A harmonica playing post graduate student at Columbia University, he escapes New York for a five week European summer busking holiday, starting in Paris. His travelling partner is fellow post grad Paul Goldberg. Deeply bruised emotionally, Chernoff is freshly out of a five year relationship, spurned for a rival named Lonnie.

Of course, Mackay Chernoff is Adam Gussow, the book mirrors his own 1980s European busking tour. The story is poignant for me. I also busked in Europe, in 1987. More on that later.

Chernoff is an established writer, with two articles soon to appear in literary journals. Two empty notebooks occupy his backpack, both are filled as his adventures gather. His backpack has much else besides, increasingly rancid young male clothing, forgotten food items (including a bag of wild apricots), harmonicas and a portable amp.

The latter is central to the story. A Lectrosolics *Mouse*, with an eight inch speaker, this classic device was the mainstay of 1980's buskers. Loud, portable, and rechargeable, the amp is Chernoff's voice in Europe. It

appears that Adam Gussow still has it. The amp has savage setbacks during the trip, the author likewise, both are redeemed at the end.

The harmonicas are Hohner Marine Bands, of course, in the well-remembered disintegrating cardboard cases. European heat and spilled wine bring on another Maine Band trait, swollen comb tines, roughly trimmed with Chernoff's Swiss Army knife.

Foreshadowing Gussow's later busking duo in Harlem, Chernoff meets duo busking partners, guitar players Finney in Paris, Bill in Avignon, then Cannes. Both raise serious blues heat, both are crazy, in different ways. A tidal wave of cheap red wine and beer washes Chernoff through the Riviera, punctuated by stunning busking episodes with five deep crowds. Magic Dick and the 10 hole Whammy Jammer vibrato bend are a touchstone for Chernoff's harmonica. His music attracts a steady swarm of gorgeous young women.

Chernoff is willing but his broken heart is a constant brake. The book explores healing from deeply held love, newly lost. Chernoff often draws close, but his past intervenes.

I was also a mid-twenties street musician, in Europe at about the same time Chernoff (Gussow) was. I too experienced the South American bands, parked on every

good busking spot in France, the African street vendors in Italy, living on the edge, closely watching for Polisi who might push them over. However I travelled with my wife, and watched the exuberance of Europe's young from a distance. I didn't have a Mouse amp, in retrospect I should have. Instead I played a tiny soprano recorder, its baroque notes piercing the squares and street corners where I set up. No crowds though, no girls. Of course. A restaurant owner in Paris paid me to stop playing...

Chernoff's travelling companion Paul is absent for most the crazy busking adventures. They split up in Paris, agreeing to meet in Bologna. This predated mobile communication devices and email, so their arrangement was like two ships agreeing to a distant rendezvous in a very crowded ocean. Managing the Italian train stations to Bologna was a hazard I well remember, Chernoff manages somehow.

While a serious book for a general audience, *Buskers Holiday* appeals to harmonica players in particular. The book recalls sweet memories of uncontrolled younger years. Also the stress and grime of cheap travel, soon into the trip Chernoff seeks sleep above all else, a luxury which long eludes him. His book, available on Amazon, should not elude us. Add it to your list.

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25-26 June 2016 - Annual NHL Chromatic Weekend, Hillscourt, Birmingham, UK.

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9-13 Aug 2016 - SPAH Convention, El Tropicano, 110 Lexington Ave, San Antonio, TX 78205

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 01656 784904, geraldzard@talktalk.net

Alan Glen - Blues/Rock Harp Teaching in South East London, 020 7732 1127 - see ad above

Patrick Ellis - chromatic/diatonic tuition, Swansea, 07760132 980, harpwales@yahoo.co.uk

Jim Hughes - Chromatic tuition, Solihull, West Midlands, 0121 744 6155, badger6@tiscali.co.uk

Ben Hewlett - Diatonic tuition, Bristol. Details opposite, www.HarmonicaWorld.net

Aidan Sheehan - Diatonic folk, blues, Cwmbran, 07812143226 whiskeyriver@ntlworld.com

Tony Jukes - diatonic/chromatic tuition - East Midlands - 01455 202829, tjukes@hotmail.co.uk

Johnny Mars - blues harp teaching in Taunton, Somerset - 01823 400744 - johnnymars@me.com

Greg Miller - Diatonic lessons, Brentford, London 07 715 583 993, www.london-harmonica.school.com

Ricky Cool - Birmingham, Blues, Country style, 07749 918343, rickycool@blueyonder.co.uk

Ian Briggs - Blues Harp Tuition, nr Exeter, Devon 01395 443158, ianh@btowers.freeserve.co.uk

Roy Green - Chromatic or Blues Tuition from Cranbrook, Kent - 01580 720148

Mat Walklate - Manchester - tuition in all styles 07725 479 148 - m.walklate23@btinternet.com

Adam Glasser is now doing Skype Chromatic Harmonica lessons - adamgharmonica@icloud.com

Eddie Martin - Bristol/Frome - blues harp tuition, begin/adv,07974120418,eddie@eddiemartin.com

David Wright - Chromatic tuition, Jazz improv, 01278 781021 - improvos@hotmail.co.uk

Keith Charnley - diatonic/chromatic tuition, 01903 500445, West Sussex

John Monaghan - Chromatic repairs and tuning. Contact - Liverpool - 0151 424 9594

Paul Gillings - Harmonica lessons in Norfolk/Suffolk, 01502 589439

Tony Perry - Chromatic tuition, Beds, Cambs, Herts Jazz/Classic, 01767680668, tpswoodyard@gmail.com

Gary Murray - Chromatic tuition - Maidenhead & Windsor, Surrey and Hampshire - 01344 842162, murray@dial.pipex.com, fe

Adam Pritchard - Bluesharp tuition, Cheltenham 01242 253949, adamсарah@prichd.co.uk

Moses Jones - Chromatic, diatonic tuition. Bristol 07707193437 moses.jones88@yahoo.com

Robert Ivacic, Slovenia, Blues tuition by Skype mobile: +386 51 410 506 - blueharp@gmail.com

Julian Jackson - Jazz/Classical Harmonica jools@yahoo.com, London, 07930 801344

Jeff Watkins - Diatonic and Chromatic tuition London 07890 834002 - jeffharp@yahoo.com

Will Pound - Learnington Spa - Harmonica tuition, all styles - 07884222356 - wll@willpound.com

Richard Taylor - Brighton - blues harp tuition, 01273271203, hove.actually@ntlworld.com

Liam Ward - Diatonic lessons, South Wales and via Skype, 07947363441, la.ward@hotmail.co.uk

Will Wilde - Diatonic tuition, Brighton, 07854591413 willharmonica.wilde@hotmail.com

Cathal Johnson - diatonic repairs/tunings and lessons - Dundalk, Eire, 00353 (0) 83 4444980 cathaljohnson@hotmail.com

Eva Hunt - teaches children aged 4-11 diatonic, chromatic, Triola, theory and general musicianship.: 07806601758 - eva.harmonica@yahoo.com



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The role of the LAGs is under review.