

Harmonica for Fun & Health Instructor Class Outline

By Author David Barrett

Session 1 (Approximately 1 Hour)

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Why harmonica?
 - a) Playing the harmonica is much like pursed lip breathing due to the resistance to airflow (keeping positive pressure in the airways). Harmonica is a low-impact exercise that maintains good oxygen levels.
 - b) Playing the harmonica well does not require a lot of airflow, though when using diaphragmatic breathing, it is very evident that more air is available to you for playing. Playing the harmonica is a great exercise for this essential breathing technique.
 - c) As your playing gets better, your lungs (diaphragm and costal muscles) become stronger and more flexible.
- 3) Hand out "Pre-Class" survey
- 4) Section 1 - Music Notation
 - a) Timeline
 - b) Staff (five lines)
 - c) G clef (treble clef)
 - d) Identifying notes on the staff
 - i) On the line (EGBDF)
 - ii) Between the lines (FACE)
 - e) Time Signature (4/4 & 3/4)
 - f) Bar lines
 - g) Whole Notes (Breathe on 4th Beat)
 - h) Half Notes (Don't breathe between half notes within the measure. Breathe on the 4th beat of each measure if necessary)
 - i) Quarter Notes
 - j) Eighth Notes
 - k) Rests
 - l) Holding the Harmonica (Don't cover your playing surface)
 - m) The Tilted Embouchure (Single Notes)
- 5) Homework
 - a) Focus on getting a single note
 - b) Use diaphragmatic breathing
 - c) Play blow for four beats, draw for four beats, repeat

Session 2

- 1) Section 2 – Starting Exercises
 - a) Examples 2-5
 - i) Focus on breathing on 4th beat for whole notes
 - ii) Watch that class is using diaphragmatic breathing
- 2) Section 3 – Solo Harmonica Songs
 - a) Show and play C Major Scale (4+, 4, 5+, 5, 6+, 6, 7, 7+) with class
 - b) Example 15 "Lovely May"
 - i) Focus on where to breathe
- 3) Homework
 - a) Go through examples 6-14 at home with CD
 - b) Practice C Major Scale with good single notes.
 - c) Practice Lovely May

Session 3

- 1) Review
 - a) C Major Scale
 - b) Lovely May
- 2) Articulations
 - a) Ha
 - b) Ta
- 3) Vibrato
 - a) Hand
 - b) Throat
- 4) Example 21 "This Old Man"
 - a) Review 8th Notes
- 5) Homework
 - a) Go through examples 16-20 at home with CD
 - b) Practice This Old Man

Session 4

- 1) Review
 - a) This Old Man
 - b) Vibrato
- 2) Solo Blues Songs
 - a) Example 31 "Big Swing"
 - b) Example 34 "Horn Man"
 - i) Play with blues jam track (key of G) at the end of the CD (Track 59 or 60)
- 3) Play for class a song that you know how to play to get them excited about continuing.
- 4) Handout "After Class" survey
- 5) Recommended Books
 - a) Blues Harmonica: *First Lessons Blues Harmonica* Bk/CD (MB20180BCD) \$7.95
 - b) Learning How To Bend: *Classic Chicago Blues Harp #1* Bk/CD (MB99106BCD) \$19.95
 - c) Learning Tongue Blocking: *Basic Blues Harmonica Method* Bk/CD (MB99103BCD) \$14.95
- 6) Thanks!

Ongoing Sessions

- 1) Now that you have taught this introduction to harmonica, there will be a number of people wanting to continue. Follow these steps if your class continues.
 - a) Complete songs where everyone plays
 - b) Move on to *Harmonica Band* songs. This is basically an orchestra of harmonicas! Not only will this be fun for all those that participate, but great public relations for your organization when the group plays out.

Provided by author David Barrett of the book/CD "Harmonica for Fun & Health," published by Mel Bay Publications.