

Dieter Kropp

Blues Harp Basics

Incl. CD



>> Harmonica course for beginners

>> For all ages

>> Notation and tablature



Dieter Kropp

Blues Harp

Basics

The original songs, texts, versions and transcriptions used in this book are copyright protected.
No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission of the copyright owner.

All rights reserved.

Cover design: OZ, Essen (Katrin and Christian Brackmann)

Type setting and layout: B&O

Photos: Dirk Schelpmeier, www.schelpmeier.com

Transcriptions, notations: Nicolai Förster/Oliver Groenewald

CD-Recording of Blues Harp, Mixing & Mastering: Traveller Studio, Erhard Kanicki, Halle/Westfalen, www.travellerstudio.de

CD-Recording of Guitar: maschinenraum, Tino B. Bubig, Herford, www.maschinenraum-studio.de

Translation: Sylkie Monoff, www.sylkiemonoff.com

© 2009 Voggenreiter publishers OHG

Viktoriastraße 25, D-53173 Bonn

www.voggenreiter.de

Phone: +49.228.93 575-0

ISBN: 978-3-8024-0857-1

Preface

The harmonica, especially the Blues harp, is a fascinating musical instrument. Although originally intended for the playing of mostly simple melodies and traditional folk songs, its extraordinary sound can be found in almost every musical context today, such as pop music, folk songs, children songs, gospel, jazz, blues, rock'n'roll or country music. Its distinctive sound is at home everywhere. The different playing techniques allow the Blues harp to be used in a very variable manner and still keep its complete independence of style. The Blues harp is always among the first choices when it comes to creating an intense atmosphere or big emotional moments in film music.

Blues Harp Basics offers a first small step into this world. The book wants to give you the opportunity of learning the first basic playing techniques in a brief and easy-to-understand form so that anybody interested in the instrument will get an idea of what is possible. I've always made sure that I was not going beyond the scope of this publication because this book is about getting into the possibilities of the Blues harp. Like I said, it is about the basics.

By occupying yourself with the instrument, the Blues Harp Basics and some hours of practice, you will be able to get some nice sounds. Starting with how to correctly hold the instrument, the proper embouchure and the playing of single notes and melodies of some specifically chosen songs, you will be getting into the Blues playing style and of course the bending. You will as well realize that the creation of a tone and tremolo have a lot to do with the shape of the hands around the instrument. Oh, that's what you already thought? Good.

The songs and examples from the book are included on the accompanying CD. You should listen to it every now and then just so that your ears will get used to the sound and you can memorize the melodies.

But for now have much fun playing!

Dieter Kropp

Inhalt

1. The instrument 7

“Blues harp” – what is that? 8

Note range 11

Holding the instrument 12

Playing single notes 14

2. The first songs 21

There you go! 22

Merrily we roll along 24

Row, row, row your boat 25

This old man 26

Twinkle, twinkle, little star 27

Schneeflockchen, Weißbrockchen 29

Auf der Mauer, auf der Lauer 31

Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken 32

Alle Vogel sind schon da 33

For he’s a jolly good fellow 34

Camptown races 36

Bound for the rio grande 38

X-tra: add color to your playing 40

3. The Blues 45

12-bar Blues progression 46

Go for it 48

Straight harp / 1st position 49

Blues playing / Blues sound 50

Checkin' it out 52

... something else on breathing 53

Blues with a bending 54

Bending – the technique 56

The cross harp table 57

4. Appendix 59

Closing remarks 60

CD tracklist 64

Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken

A quite simple traditional and I hope you are familiar with the melody. Then it will certainly be easier for you to find the notes on the Blues harp. It is even possible to trace the song origin far back. The melody goes back to a Neapolitan canzonetta from before 1816: "Oh cara mama mia". Classical Niccolò Paganini played variations of this melody in his concerts as the "Carnevale di Venezia", Opus 10. Based on this, Chopin composed his Rondo No. 1 as a variation opus under the title of „Souvenirs de Paganini“.

The text of "Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken" emerged for the first time in the Saarland in 1886. The same melody is used for the songs "Ein Hund kam in die Küche" and the erotic song "Ich lieg im Bett und schwitze". Often this song is part of a game or round, which makes it harder to play the Blues harp at the same time. Well, that's where decisions have to be made.

Nena seems to be very fond of this piece, too. The song is included on her children songs CD "Unser Apfelhaus" with an additional second verse "Mein Schuh, der hat drei Locher".



	C		G ⁷					C						
	Mein	Hut,	der	hat	drei	E - cken,	drei	E - cken	hat	mein	Hut,	und		
Channel	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	5	5	6	6	6	5	6
Blow/draw	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑

	Dm				G ⁷				C			
	hatt'	er	nicht	drei	E - cken,	so	war's	auch	nicht	mein	Hut.	
	7	6	5	5	5	4	5	5	6	6	6	4
	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑

Blues with a bending

Now there's just the bending left as a playing technique for notes, and not just the bending. It simply is the most difficult playing technique on the Blues harp because it lets us play notes that are not on the instrument, which for now works best for the lower draw notes.

But let's get to it as generations of musicians did before you: You learn by listening, feeling it, experimenting and playing. For example with the song below. A Blues that combines our two essential playing techniques for the Blues harp, bending and cross harping. Listen to it (CD track 26).

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Channel 4 Draw changes its original pitch. We lower note D and make it then glide up again. This effect is achieved by playing the bending technique. So bending is what you have to do when you want to hear this sound.

In our tablature, the symbol for bending is: ↵

Take a look at the first bar of the next song:

Bending

Channel	4	4	4
Blow/draw	↓	↵	↓
Note name	D	C#	D



25 ... and this is how it sounds.

We make the first note (D) glide down to the next one (C#, the second note) ... to make it then glide back up to the D.

Later you will find out and learn that it is of course possible to hit the lower notes accurately and to play even more additional ones in some channels. This will then be indicated in the tablature by means of several checks at the arrows.

CD tracklist

1	First notes, C and D	17
2	First notes, E and F	17
3	First notes, G and A	18
4	First notes, B and C	18
5	C major scale	18
6	Exercise 1 on the core octave	19
7	Exercise 1 on the core octave	19
8	Exercise 1 on the core octave	19
9	There you go	22
10	Merrily we roll along.....	24
11	Row, row, row your boat	25
12	This old man	26
13	Twinkle, twinkle, little star	27
14	Schneeflockchen, Weißbrockchen (German traditional)	29
15	Auf der Mauer, auf der Lauer (German traditional)	31
16	Mein Hut, der hat drei Ecken (German traditional)	32
17	Alle Vogel sind schon da (German traditional)	33
18	For he's a jolly good fellow	34
19	Camptown races	36
20	Bound for the Rio Grande	38
21	Sound variations Channel 4 blow note	40
22	Go for it!	48
23	Rhythmic figure.....	51
24	Checkin' it out	52
25	Bending (Channel 4 draw note)	54
26	Blues with a bending	55
27	For he's a jolly good fellow, rock style.....	60