April 2012 Newsletter

Leader in Blues Harmonica Education since 1994

BLUESHARMONICA.COM - WHAT'S NEW!

Sugar Ray Norcia Interview

Videos Include: Sugar Ray's Early Years; The Bluetones, Big Walter Horton and Roomful of Blues; Sugar Ray's Current Schedule; Essential Artists to Study; Improvising; Accompaniment Playing; Bending and Music Theory; Tongue Blocking; 1st Position Playing; 3rd Position Playing; Chromatic Harmonica; Vocals and Stage Presence; What do you like to hear when Listening to other Harmonica Players; Sugar Ray's Equipment; Closing

To watch a video of what's new at BluesHarmonica.com visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP84ZvjBi0g

Billy Boy Arnold Interview

Videos include: Billy Boy's early years and meeting John Lee Williamson, Part 1; Billy Boy's early years and meeting John Lee Williamson, Part 2; Working with Bo Diddley; More Recording History; Billy Boy talks about Little Walter; Billy Boy talks about Rice Miller, Big Walter Horton, Kim Wilson and Junior Wells; Improvising; Tongue Blocking; Accompaniment Playing; Position Playing; Chromatic Harmonica; Tips to Harmonica Players and Closing

Charlie Musselwhite Interview (April)

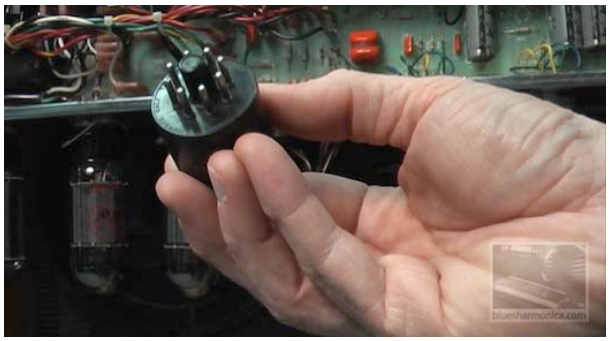
Videos include: Charlie's Early Years: Memphis; Charlie's Early Years: Chicago, Part 1; Charlie's Early Years: Chicago, Part 2; Charlie's Early Years: Chicago, Part 3 and Big Walter Horton; Moving to California; Gary Smith; Improvising; Accompaniment Playing; Position Playing; Minor Playing; Bending; Tongue Blocking; Playing the Chromatic and more Big Walter Horton Stories; What Charlie Likes to Hear in Other Players; Little Walter and Cadillac Records; Charlie's Equipment; Closing

Curtis Salgado Interview (May)

Videos include: Curtis' Early Years, Part 1; Curtis' Early Years, Part 2; Early Bands and Robert Cray Band; Early Influences: Gary Smith, Rod Piazza and Paul deLay; Essential Listening; Roomful of Blues; Tongue Blocking and Tongue Switching; Bending Control and Dynamics; Playing on the High End of the Harp; Music Theory and Band Communication; Improvising and Vocals; Accompaniment Playing; Curtis' Equipment; Closing

Bassman Chronicles - New Equipment Lessons

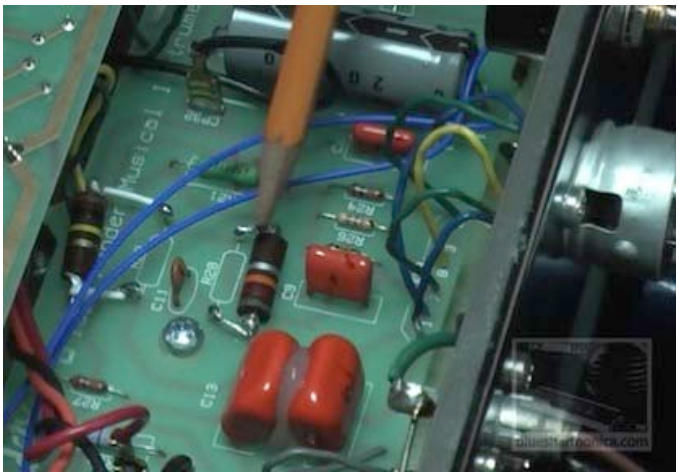
The 1959 Fender Bassman Amplifier has been the standard for gigging blues harmonica players since we've had to deal with loud bands in the 1960's. Priced around $10,000, the originals are now collectors items and are no longer practical options. The 1959 Fender Reissue Bassman (originally released in 1990), though not the most friendly amplifier to play stock, can be purchased for a very reasonable price in the used market (~$700) and with some tube changes it can sound fantastic. The new LTD gets closer to the common modifications used by customizers (tube rectifier, shellacked pine cabinet and adjustable bias pot... though the speakers are less desirable than the 1990's models) and can be purchased at most music stores.



With the help of my student and friend Mark Overman, artists such as Mark Hummel and Gary Smith and amp experts like Skip Simmons and Dale Laslie, this ongoing series chronicles the complete story of how to purchase, modify, setup and perform with the 1959 Fender Bassman Reissue Amplifier.

- Submission #1 - Introduction to the Bassman Chronicles, Part 1
- Submission #1 - Introduction to the Bassman Chronicles, Part 2
- Submission #1 - Qualities of a Good Sounding Amp, Part 1
- Submission #1 - Qualities of a Good Sounding Amp, Part 2
- Submission #1 - Why Choose the Fender Bassman?
- Submission #1 - History and Construction of the 1959 Fender Bassman Reissue
- Submission #2 - 1990 Bassman Journey
- Submission #2 - Comparing Stock 1990 Bassman & Fully Modded 1990 Bassman
- Submission #2 - Bridging Channels 1 & 2
- Submission #2 - Tube Values
- Submission #2 - Changing Tubes on 1990 Bassman, Part 1
- Submission #2 - Changing Tubes on 1990 Bassman, Part 2
- Submission #2 - Before & After Tube Changes

- Submission #2 - Comparing 1990 Bassman with Tube Changes & Fully Modded 1990 Bassman
- Submission #3 - 1990 Bassman Hits the Bandstand, Part 1
- Submission #3 - 1990 Bassman Hits the Bandstand, Part 2
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Introduction
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Shure CM and CR Elements
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Shure & Astatic Crystal and Ceramic Elements, Part 1
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Shure & Astatic Crystal and Ceramic Elements, Part 2
-Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Impedance Matching
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Kinder Anti-Feedback+
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: All Mics Compared
- Submission #4 - Mics & The Bassman: Final Thoughts
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Introduction
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Cabinet
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Speakers
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Tubes
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Preferred Mics
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Why the Bassman?
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Bias Pot & Circuit
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Cost
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Stage Placement
- Submission #5 - Gary Smith's Bassman: Effects & Closing
- Submission #6 - Amp Setup Night at the Dell: Intro
- Submission #6 - Amp Setup Night at the Dell: Part 1
- Submission #6 - Amp Setup Night at the Dell: Part 2
- Submission #7 - Amp Setup Night at the Dell: Comments, Part 1
- Submission #7 - Amp Setup Night at the Dell: Comments, Part 2
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, Intro
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 1
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 2
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 3
-Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 4
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 5
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 6
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Tester Comments, 7
- Submission #8 - Amp Setup Night: Closing
- Submission #9 - Bassman LTD, Part 1
- Submission #9 - Bassman LTD, Part 2
- Submission #10 - Finish
- Submission #10 - Resistor Change and Bias Intro
- Submission #10 - Hearing Bias Change
- Submission #10 - Using Bias Meter
- Submission #10 - Closing



To watch a video of what's new at BluesHarmonica.com visit:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP84ZvjBi0g

New Joe Filisko Lessons

- 18 Harmonica Insights, #3 - Posture
- 18 Harmonica Insights, #2 - Hands
- 18 Harmonica Insights, #1 - Holding the Harmonica
- 5 Types of Sound, Part 1
- 5 Types of Sound, Part 2
- Breathing Guide: Introduction
- Breathing Guide: Breathing Range
- Breathing Guide: Exhale Push
- Breathing Guide: Key Points
- Breathing Guide: Nose Breathing
- Breathing Guide: Review - Tongue Blocking Guide: Introduction
- Tongue Blocking Guide: Reasons #1 and #2
- Tongue Blocking Guide: Reasons #3 through #5
- Tongue Blocking Guide: Reasons #6 through #9
- Tongue Blocking Guide: Disadvantages
- Tongue Blocking Guide: Closing Comments

New Gary Smith Contributor Videos

- Submission #29 - Accompaniment Playing 2, Intro
- Submission #29 - Accompaniment Playing 2, Shuffle in E
- Submission #29 - Accompaniment Playing 2, Big Boss Man in E
- Submission #29 - Accompaniment Playing 2, Swing in F - Part 1
- Submission #29 - Accompaniment Playing 2, Swing in F - Part 2

New Mark Hummel Contributor Videos

- Submission #16 - Little Walter, Part 1
- Submission #16 - Little Walter, Part 2
- Submission #17 - Rice Miller, Part 1
- Submission #17 - Rice Miller, Part 2
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Rehearsal
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Bisharat
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Troch
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Molitor
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Final Jam Pt 1
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Final Jam Pt 2
- Submission #18 - King of Swing Concert, Winner

New Aki Kumar Contributor Videos

- Submission #9 – Modifying Fender Hotrod Deville Amplifier, Part 1: Intro
- Submission #9 – Modifying Fender Hotrod Deville Amplifier, Part 2: At The Shop
- Submission #9 – Modifying Fender Hotrod Deville Amplifier, Part 3: On the Bandstand

New Joe Tartaglia Contributor Videos

- Joe Tartaglia says Goodbye

New Ryan Walker Contributor Videos

Follow Intermediate student Ryan Walker as he studies blues harmonica seriously for the first time. In these videos you'll see his actual biweekly lessons with me (in their entirety) as well as see video reports from him between lessons. These videos are highly valuable to the Intermediate blues harmonica student seeking guidance on what to learn and when. Video submissions are as follows:

- Lesson 1 - Getting to Know Ryan, Part 1
- Lesson 1 - Getting to Know Ryan, Part 2
- Lesson 1 - Tremolo Review
- Lesson 1 - Solo Harmonica Study 1, Example 1.2
- Lesson 1 - Solo Harmonica Study 1, Examples 1.4 through 1.7
- Lesson 1 - Solo Harmonica Study 1, Examples 1.8 through 1.12
- Lesson 1 - Take It Easy Now Study Song (TB and Bending Study 2.5) Introduction
- Lesson 1 - Take It Easy Now, Chorus 1
- Lesson 1 - Take It Easy Now, Chorus 2
- Lesson 1 - Take It Easy Now, Chorus 3 to End
- Lesson 1 - Closing
- Checking In - Between Lessons #1 and #2
- Lesson 2 - Intro
- Lesson 2 - Ryan plays Take it Easy Now
- Lesson 2 - Cupping and Wa Wa
- Lesson 2 - How to play with a Band, Part 1
- Lesson 2 - How to play with a Band, Part 2
- Lesson 2 - How to play Take It Easy Now with a Band, Part 3
- Lesson 2 - Solo Harmonica Study 1, Examples 1.13 through 1.15
- Lesson 2 - Solo Harmonica Study 1, Examples 2.1 to End
- Lesson 2 - Gary's Blues, Choruses 1 through 3
- Lesson 2 - Gary's Blues, Choruses 4 to End
- Lesson 2 - Closing

Rhumba King - Blues Harmonica Original Instrumental Songwriting Contest

Presented by BluesHarmonica.com and the Harmonica Masters Workshop

Rhumba KING Songwriting Contest

It's time to place what you've been learning at BluesHarmonica.com into context! The top three entries will win entrance to the Harmonica Masters Workshop in Trossingen, Germany 10/31-11/4/2012 (http://www.harmonica-masters.de/) as well as have the opportunity to perform their compositions live with B.B. & the Blues Shacks at the Harmonica Masters Concert Friday evening November 2nd! The audience will judge the three performances, with the overall winner crowned Rhumba King and given the opportunity to perform with David Barrett at the end of the evening.

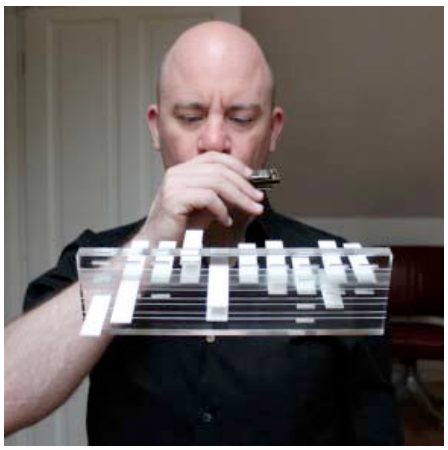
Guidelines

1) Use Diatonic or Chromatic Harmonica - Custom tunings, valving, etc. are allowed. You may also use more than one harmonica if you wish (switching harps in multiple positions).
2) Original instrumental composition (no vocals) - Adapting a non-harmonica tune to the harmonica or rearranging another popular harmonica tune is allowed, but arrangements too close to the original will be scored low.
3) May be acoustic or amplified
4) Accompanied - There must be at least one other instrument to accompany you. Using a pre-recorded jam track (most will do this), a live band or just a guitarist/pianist are all good examples. You may have other instruments solo in your instrumental.
5) Groove – Rhumba or other Latin groove very close to the Rhumba (email David Barrett with a sample if you're not sure)
6) Must be able to recreate the composition live on the bandstand (including no electronic loopers or sound-on-sound devises).
7) Less than 5 minutes in length
8) Must be a current, subscribed member of BluesHarmonica.com from the date of your submission to the announcement of the winners. You can live anywhere in the world to participate.
9) You may not use a submission previously used at BluesHarmonica.com (such as the Shuffle King or King of the Swing)
10) Have fun… enjoy the process!

Judging Criteria

Good instrumental writing practices are taught in detail in the ten Improvising Study lessons at BluesHarmonica.com, but here are the general areas judges David Barrett (www.BluesHarmonica.com), Steve Baker (www.SteveBaker.de) and Lee Sankey (www.LeeSankey.com) are focusing on…

1) Head/Hook - How catchy is your hook or head in your composition? If we can't stop humming it after we listen, you did a great job!
2) Body - This is the solo section of your instrumental. How well you use Chorus Forms, Focus Notes, Rhythm, Texture, Breaks, Bridge, Dynamics and possible a Soloing Theme to make your soloing interesting.
3) Execution - This is the technical side of your performance: your tone, rhythm, control of technique (bends played in tune), etc. This doesn't mean that you have to use difficult techniques in your composition (areas 1 and 2 above are scored higher), but what you do play should be executed well.



Performance

The top three entries will be given access to attend classes, jam sessions and performances at the 2012 Harmonica Masters Workshop. This access is non-transferable. We'll rehearse late in the afternoon on Friday. Winners will be responsible for travel, lodging and all other expenses.

Rhumba Lessons and Jam Tracks on BluesHarmonica.com
1) “Rollin’ Rhumba” 3rd Position Studies 1, 2 and 3
2) Solo Harmonica Study 1 (Examples 2.4 through 2.6), Study 2 (Examples 2.3 and 2.4) and Study 3 (Examples 2.3 through 2.5)
3) “Minor Mambo” Gary Smith Artist Study

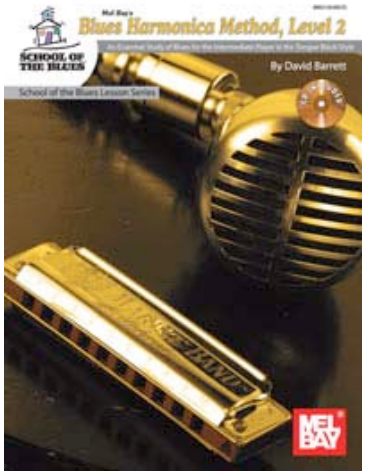
Schedule
4/1 - Entries can be uploaded to site, 7/15 - No more entries accepted , 8/1 - Winners announced , 11/2 - Performance!

Video Announcement
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP84ZvjBi0g

Complete List of Lessons

Visit http://www.bluesharmonica.com/lesson-list for a complete listing of lessons on the website... there are now over 2,000 lesson videos!

HARMONICAMASTERCLASS.COM - WHAT'S NEW!



Blues Harmonica Method Level 2: The Tongue Block Method
School of the Blues Lesson Series (MB21054BCD)
is an exciting intermediate to advanced Blues harmonica course in the tongue block style. The ideas presented are solid in the Blues tradition with great sounding exercises and songs to play. Bending and advanced Tongue Blocking are covered along with three full-length song studies... “Lick Train,” “Serious Fun” and “Feelin’ Good.” Recording includes all harmonica parts notated in the book with accompaniment music. This book and its recording use the “C” and “A” major diatonic harmonica.

Available at http://www.harmonicamasterclass.com/bluesharp2.htm or your favorite book retailer.

INTERNET FINDS

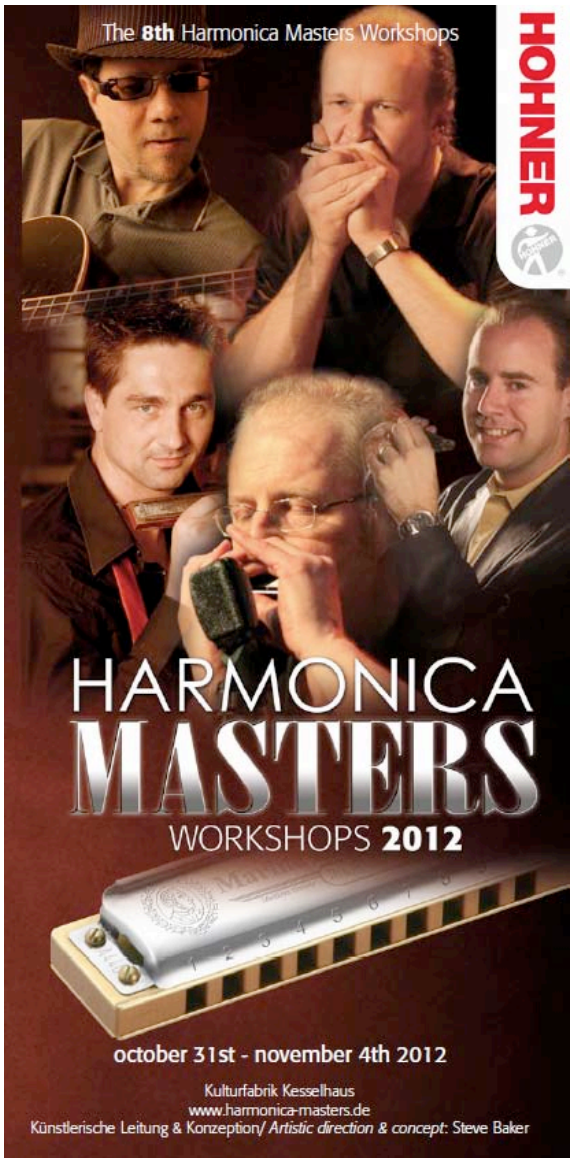
How to Make a Record Clock

Join me for a quick and easy lesson on how to build a record clock! http://www.facebook.com/bluesharmonica

Hohner Chromatic Harmonica Repair Videos

In an unprecedented step for a major harmonica manufacturer, Hohner Harmonicas has released a series of professionally recorded harmonica service videos. Demonstrated by Gabriela Hand, head of chromatic harmonica manufacturing in Trossingen, Germany and presented by Steve Baker. These HD videos provide detailed information on many major aspects of harmonica maintenance and also introduce the new Hohner Instant Workshop toolset, designed to enable easy reed replacement in addition to all other maintenance operations covered in the videos. The overall concept is the brainchild of Hohner Service Department head Michael Timler. Though primarily dealing with the chromatic harmonica, many of the subjects covered in the videos such as tuning, centering, reed offsetting or reed replacement are applicable to all types of harmonica and will undoubtedly be equally useful for diatonic players. The tools and techniques presented here will also be invaluable for harmonica technicians and may well revolutionize harmonica repair by rendering it accessible to everyone.

links to the individual videos on YouTube:
Lesson 1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7Dc3ssh_bM
Lesson 2 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDjJlluEX-g
Lesson 2.1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ju0FOZcCU4
Lesson 3 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c9MUfhZWJM
Lesson 4 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMlGCMwU8Ko
Lesson 5 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12cdfpp2Sg0
Lesson 6 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9-31j2nPgE
Lesson 7 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfC9OPmhyuU
Lesson 8 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fVReyQfwA8
Lesson 8.1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMj9e853zIM



Harmonica Masters Workshop – Trossingen, Germany

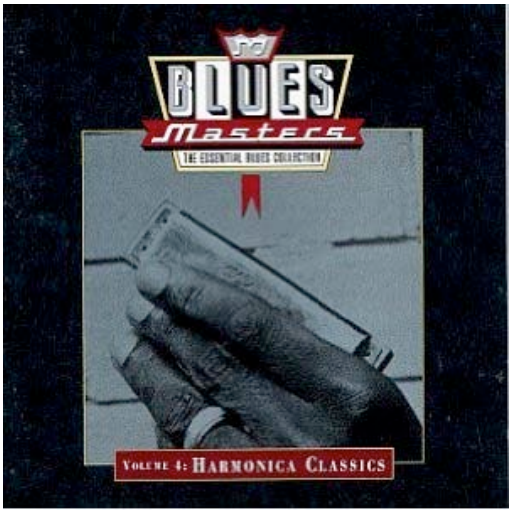
Join me, Steve Baker, Joe Filisko, Michael Arlt, Riedel Diegel, Lee Sankey, Eric Noden and a host of other performers for Europe's premier blues harmonica event! On top of classes and performances also enjoy tours of the Hohner Factory and the German Harmonica and Accordion Museum. Don't miss this opportunity to work with the best instructors in the world!

For more information visit: http://www.harmonica-masters.de/

Harmonica Collectors International

Harmonica Collectors International is looking for new members to keep the club running strong. If you're interested in collecting or just learning more about the history of harmonicas (they have a great newsletter filled with pictures and historic information), become a member. For more information visit: http://www.harmonicacollectorsinternational.com/

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH



In this issue we dig into one of the greatest classic blues harmonica instrumentals of all time, "Steady" by Jerry McCain. This is in my personal top ten of favorite harmonica instrumentals. The qualities that make this song so great are listed below. Make sure to listen to each of these elements in each chorus that you study.

1) His recorded tone is killer
2) From lick to lick he moves between light and bluesy
3) He varies his volume (dynamics) very nicely from phrase to phrase
4) Killer V-IV-I Transitions (licks found on measures 9, 10 and resolving on 11)
5) No turnarounds

1st Chorus - ABC Chorus Form
The total length of the I Chord is five measures. If you eventually play this instrumental with a band, get rid of the extra measure of rest at the end (notated). Also, the band enters in an awkward spot. When playing this with a band, ask them to enter on the IV Chord. Notice his use of the 3 draw. Sometimes he'll be at the quartertone (a slight bend), at the half step or no bend at all. I've said it many times, and will say it many times more, the 3 draw is the most important note on the harmonica for controlling the feel of your solo in second position. Make sure you're matching his pitch on the 3 draw.

2nd Chorus - ABC Chorus Form
After the screamin' 5 draw, his next four notes fall into a rhythm which is awkward for most players. Take your time and feel where he is when playing along with the original recording.

3rd Chorus - ABC Chorus Form
Here he moves to the lower-end of the harmonica for a nice change from the strong 5 draw of the previous chorus.

4th Chorus - ABC Chorus Form
This is the most famous chorus of the song. High-end playing by blues harmonica players of that era in second position was VERY rare. For this reason, this is the most quoted high-end passage from classic songs. The note combinations he used can be very challenging to play… I have provided an easy-play version at the bottom of the page for you to use if you wish.

5th Chorus - ABC Chorus Form
Here he brings the song down again to the lower holes, with the song fading out.

What To Tell The Band
- Key of F
- Lazy Shuffle (This might mean nothing to them, but lazy gives you a sense of a relaxed beat)
- I'll play the I (Chord), meet me on the IV (Chord)
  (Fade-outs are uncommon on the bandstand. Play a standard ending to finish the song up.)

Steady

By: Jerry McCain / Album: Blues Masters, Vol. 4: Harmonica Classics (Rhino R2 71124) - Recorded 1961

Key: F (B♭ Harmonica in 2nd Position) / Groove: Lazy Shuffle / Start: From the I, Telling band to enter on the IV chord is safest

Transcribed by David Barrett

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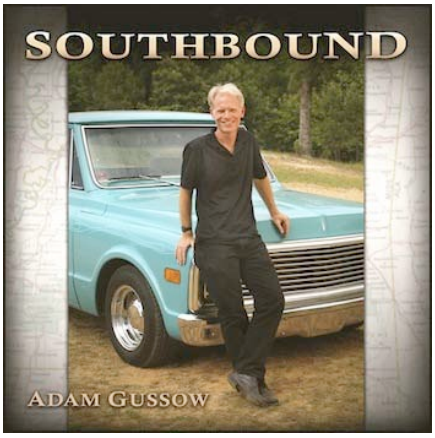
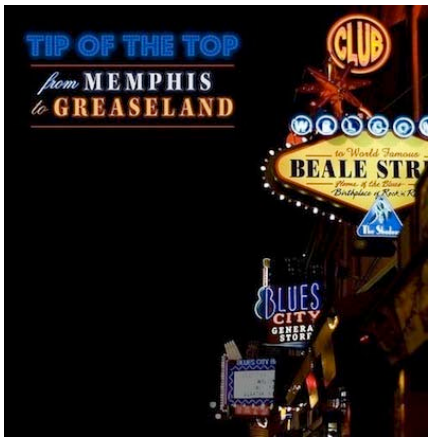
RECOMMENDED LISTENING

Southbound



Adam Gussow is pleased to announce the release of *Southbound*, his second solo album. Nine of the album's eleven cuts were tracked in one-man band mode, but all of them have been hot-rodded with the help of Mississippi's best session men—including another New York outmigrant, Bronx-born bassist Jerry Jemmott, "the groovemaster" celebrated for his work with Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, B. B. King, King Curtis, and the Allman Brothers. Those who know him for his harmonica work will be surprised to find out that he also plays guitar on half the tracks as well. *Southbound* is available ONLY as a zip file download (WAV or mp3) from Modern Blues Harmonica by way of Tradebit. For more information visit: http://www.modernbluesharmonica.com/southbound_1.html You can also see an interview of Adam at BluesHarmonica.com



From Memphis to Greaseland, Tip of the Top

Recorded and produced at Kid Andersen's Greaseland Studios in Campbell CA, Tip of the Top's third album features smokin' hot originals, spontaneous takes on some blues classics and an all-star guest lineup featuring Johnny "Cat" Soubrand, Sid Morris and Chris "Kid" Andersen himself. Aki Kumar's energy, tone and phrasing are his finest to date… I know you'll really enjoy this CD. For more information visit: http://www.tipofthetopmusic.com/music.cfm

Helge Tallqvist & Jukka Gustavson Band Plays Erik Lindstrom

In Helge's words, "When I, as a blues harmonica player, had the idea to make a record based on old Finnish popular songs, I started to look for songs that could be suitably arranged for the chromatic harmonica and into the blues genre. Erik Lindström's "jazzy" way of composing interested me the most and I decided to make this record based only on his 1950's compositions. " The end result is a traditional blues player playing the chromatic on really well constructed melodies… a very cool project. For more information visit: http://www.helgetallqvist.com/

More to come in future issues! Thanks to Diane Smith for editing (yes, she plays harp too!).

Best Regards,

David Barrett

The Future of Blues Harmonica Education IS HERE!
www.BluesHarmonica.com

President, Harmonica Masterclass Co.
"Leader in Blues Harmonica Education"
www.harmonicamasterclass.com

Founder/Director, School of the Blues
www.schooloftheblues.com

Author, Mel Bay Publications & Blues Revue Magazine
www.harmonicamasterclass.com/books.htm & www.bluesrevue.com

Plays Hohner Harmonicas customized by Joe Filisko & MegaTone Harmonica Amplifiers
www.hohnerusa.com, www.joefilisko.com & www.megatoneamps.com

Editor & Columnist for HarmonicaSessions.com
www.HarmonicaSessions.com