

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 8358

AN INSTRUCTION METHOD FOR PLAYING THE BLUES HARMONICA

Blues * Harp

BY TONY "LITTLE SUN" GLOVER I

BASED ON THE BOOK PUBLISHED BY OAK PUBLICATIONS

WITH DOCUMENTARY RECORDINGS



CONTENTS:

- 1 LP
- 1 program notes

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TONE LAYOUT
 SINGLE NOTE EXERCISES
 1st & 2nd POSITION -- EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLES
 CROSS HARP -- CHORDS
 SIMPLE RHYTHM EXERCISE
 MORE COMPLEX RHYTHM EXERCISE
 12-BAR RHYTHM EXERCISE
 VARYING RHYTHMS, TONAL EFFECTS
 BENDING NOTES
 TRANSITIONAL BENDS, 10-BAR EXERCISE
 3rd POSITION - EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLES
 4th POSITION - EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLES
 COMBINED EFFECTS - TWO EXAMPLES

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

Blues * Harp

AN INSTRUCTION METHOD
 FOR PLAYING THE BLUES, HARMONICA

BY TONY "LITTLE SUN" GLOVER I

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Harmonica Blues * Harp

AN INSTRUCTION METHOD
FOR PLAYING THE BLUES HARMONICA
BY TONY "LITTLE SUN" GLOVER I

Guitar: Linus Blato
Recorded by: Gary Glover
Produced by: Mad Dog Productions
Choreography by: Queen Jane

Side A

Band One: Tone Layout (2:18)
Band Two: Single Note Exercises (3:00)
Band Three: 1st & 2nd Position--Explanation and Examples (5:09)
Band Four: Cross Harp--Chords (5:37)
Band Five: Simple Rhythm Exercise (2:52)
Band Six: More Complex Rhythm Exercise (2:15)
Band Seven: 12-Bar Rhythm Exercise (2:10)
Total time 23:21

Side B

Band One: Varying Rhythms, Tonal Effects (5:24)
Band Two: Bending Notes (4:00)
Band Three: Transitional Bends, 10-Bar Exercise (3:55)
Band Four: 3rd Position--Explanation and Examples (3:50)
Band Five: 4th Position--Explanation and Examples (3:25)
Band Six: Combined Effects--Two Examples
Total time 22:44

The following is not a transcription of the record, but covers the same material in greater depth.

NOTES by Tony "Little Sun" Glover

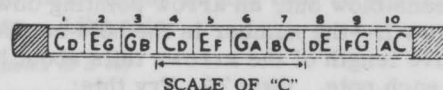
This record is intended to be an introduction to the basics of playing blues style harmonica. It covers basic techniques, positions and effects used in blues, with exercises and demonstrations played out. (Most of these are the same as in the instruction book so you can hear how they sound--however, you should be able to get a pretty fair idea of what it's all about from just this record alone ... in other words you don't have to have the book to dig what's going on here.)

Some general thoughts: At first you'll probably model yourself after your favorite harpman and try to sound as much like him as possible. And that's good, because you need a good solid background to work from. But don't get hung up there in someone else's style--go on to make your own style and tell your own story.

Another thing, you won't learn more than just the bare basics and techniques here, so if you're serious about playing blues you're gonna have to do a lot of listening to blues records. Dig the list in back--many styles are covered there, and by digging someone whose style you like you'll learn a lot about phrasing, timing, dynamics and so on. These are things you'll have to know, and the only way you'll learn them is by getting yourself a good listening background before you play. And later, you'll learn by playing. But first you have to know the structure of the language--and that's what I'm trying to tell you here.

SIDE A

BAND ONE: All the exercises on here are done with a Marine Band 10-hole harmonica tuned in the key of C--so if you plan to play along, you'll need one. Here's a diagram of the tone layout for this harp:



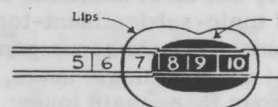
The large capital letters are for the "blow" or out notes, the small capital letters are for the "draw" or in notes. Notice that there is only one complete octave or scale on this harp--found in holes #4 through #7. The notes missing in the first three holes, and in holes #8 through #10 are what make the blues style of "crossed" harp playing possible. This tonal layout is the same for every key 10-hole Marine Band harp--A, B-flat, B, C, D, E, E-flat, F & G. In other words, the same notes are dropped or repeated in the same holes. A harp tuned in the key of A would have a tone layout like this: #1 hole: blow-A, draw-B; #2 hole: blow-C#, draw-E; #3 hole: blow-E, draw-G#, followed by a complete scale starting with A as a blow note in #4 hole. (You don't have to worry about the sharps by the way--any harps tuned in keys with sharps or flats in them already have them built in--the reeds are made that way.) So if you have harps in other keys, you can make a diagram of their tone layout by transposing, following the above diagram, beginning with the "key" note as a blow note in #1 hole.

It doesn't really matter too much how you hold the harp, just so you have a firm grip on it. Dig the drawing:



If you hold it in your left hand as above, you will be able to close your right hand over your harp and harp hand, so that you can make a complete "cup"--shutting over the low-note end of the harp. If you are left-handed you may want to hold it in your right hand, but in that case it should be upside down (with the numbered side of the harp facing down, low notes towards the palm of your hand) so that you can still get a complete closed "cup" over the low-note end of the harp. This is important because many of the tremolo and hand-made effects are usually done on the low notes--and it's easier if your cup covers these notes.

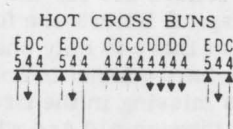
One of the first things in playing harp to learn is to be able to get clear, single, unwavering tones. There are two main ways. The first is by simply pursing your lips down until the hole between them is no bigger than a single hole on a harp. The second is by tongue blocking. Dig the drawing:



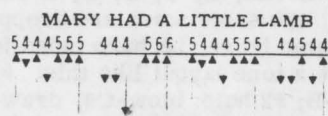
Your lips cover four holes, your tongue blocks off three of them, so that only the one sounds. Both methods are okay (tongue-blocking is good for chromatic harps)--but I prefer the "pursing down" method--it works out better when you're getting around all over the harp in a hurry.

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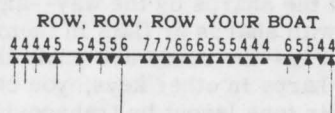
BAND TWO: Practice getting single notes by pursing down. Get so that you can hit single notes anywhere on the harp with ease. Try to keep the tone steady and unwavering. Here are some simple melody exercises, using some rather stupid tunes--they don't have much to do with blues, but the practice in getting around and hitting only single notes is good for you. (This system of notation was invented by Thomas Hart Benton, the painter, and is used by permission of M. Hohner, Inc.) An arrow pointing up ↑ means blow out, an arrow pointing down ↓ means draw it--the number is the hole number, and the relative length of the arrows tells about how long you hold each note. Okay?? Try this:



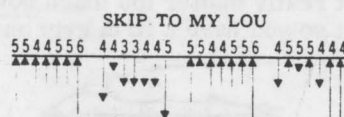
Here's another exercise with a few "staccato" or short/fast notes in it:



More staccato notes and another hole added here:



Here's some fancier playing--and an actual folk song:



Run through all of these until you're able to get around pretty fast, being sure you're only hitting single tones.

BAND THREE: All of the last exercises were in what's called "first position" or "straight harp"--you've been playing the harp in the same key that it's tuned to--the key of C. This position is good to use if you have to do a lot of melody notes--many of the jug bands used this, so do many of the "cowboy" singers in the Guthrie -Elliott vein.

You all know about the chord structure behind most blues and folk songs, right? There are three main chords: the Tonic (which is the same as the key you're playing in... in the key of C--it's C), the Subdominant (a fourth above the tonic... in the key of C, it's F) and the Dominant (a fifth above the tonic... in the key of C, it's G). Those are the bones of the structure on which most blues and folk music is hung. Of course it gets a hell of a lot more complicated than that in practice, but most additions are built on the usual pattern of tonic-subdominant-tonic-dominant-subdominant-tonic. Now to accompany a guitar playing in the key of C using single notes, here's the easiest way to get your three main tones:

- C: blow #4 hole (Tonic)
- F: draw #5 hole (Subdominant)
- G: blow #3 hole (Dominant)

You'll hear a sample of one complete progression (like one verse of a song) in the standard pattern.

Play along with it. The chord changes are; C, F, C, G, F and C again. This is the bare, simplest way to play in first or "straight" position. In practice you'll be playing a lot more than that--but this is where your main tones for the main chords are found.

To play blues style you'll have to be able to "bend" or flat out notes. And draw notes are easier to bend than blow notes. Now in blues progressions, you need to be able to "bend" most in the Tonic and Dominant chords--so it'd help if they were both "draw" notes--which they aren't in first position. Also in blues style you'll need chords (two or three notes together) which will fit with a guitar--and in first position you have to stick mostly to single notes to sound all right.

So, you need another position to play in. (All that position actually means is "key".) Let's try playing this C harp in another position, or key--the key of G. Here are the chords for G, on the harp:

- G: draw #2 hole (tonic)
- C: blow #4 hole (subdominant)
- D: draw #4 hole (dominant)

This key or "position" meets the requirements above--both the Tonic and Dominant are draw notes (so they can be bent fairly easily), and several chords which fit with the guitar are possible. This is what is called "second position" or "cross harp". You're still playing in the same key as the guitar is--but you're playing in a key different from the one that the harp is tuned to.

Again, you'll hear one complete progression, this time with the guitar in G, and accompanied by a C harp played cross style in the key of G. The usual patterns are used and it plays like this:

- G (draw #2 hole), C (blow #4 hole), G (draw #2 hole), D (draw #4 hole), C (blow #4 hole) and G (draw #2 hole)

Play along with this until you get used to finding where your main notes in "cross" position are. Get so that when you play a harp you automatically play it crossed, whether there's a guitar around or not--starting with your main or Tonic chord as a draw note in hole #2.

BAND FOUR: In "cross" harp style, you're playing a harp that's tuned a fourth above the key of the guitar--or the same pitch as the Subdominant (second) chord--this is a handy way to remember it, by the way. Or you can count out the cross on the chromatic scale--your harp key is five steps up (to the right) from the guitar key, beginning with the tone next to the guitar key. For example: if the guitar is in the key of E and you want to play cross harp, count up five steps (halftones, actually) beginning with F, and you land on A--which is the Subdominant chord in the key of E, and the key harp you use to play cross style. (If you run out of tones counting to the right, go back to the left and continue from there.) Here's the scale: (by the way A# is the same as B-flat)

CHROMATIC SCALE

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B

Once you're used to playing in cross position, try this: play a Tonic chord (draw in on holes #2 and #3). Bring your free hand (the one not holding the harp) up so that the heel of it is braced against the heel of your harp hand. Then close your free hand over the harp and harp hand, making a "cup." Keep the heels of your hands together, and using them as a pivot point, open and close the cup while

playing the Tonic chord--you should get a tremolo effect. Also try moving your whole hand back and forth, opening and closing the cup--using your elbow as a pivot point. You should get a little more of a frantic or intense sound.

Blow out through holes #2 and #3 and you get part of a subdominant chord--try using the tremolo, alternating between blow and draw chords, always ending on the draw, or Tonic chord.

Here's something you'll need to know to be able to play chord rhythms--how to "kill" or cut-off chords sharply. First try on the Tonic or draw chord in holes #2 and #3. Pull your breath in sharply, and bring the tongue up towards the roof of the mouth. Listen to the way it sounds without the harp, then try it with a harp until you can duplicate the sharp cut-off sound you'll hear.

Then work on getting a sharp "kill" sound on the Subdominant or blow chord through holes #2 and #3. Your tongue works about the same but your breath explodes out in a short burst, from the top of your mouth, not from way down in your chest. Practice until you can duplicate both in and out chord "kills" like you hear.

BAND FIVE: Try "talking" through the harp. You don't actually say the words, but form your lips and tongue as though you were going to--then make the sound through the harp. Try saying dit-dit on your draw or tonic chord--using a "kill" after each "dit". On the blow or subdominant chord say "dah-dah", again cutting off the chords--but not as sharply as on the draw chords. Here's an exercise using chords:

(Use holes #2 and #3)

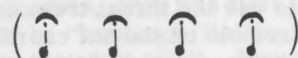
dit-dit dah-dah dit-dit dah-dah
dit-dit dah-dah etc.

()

Start slowly, then as you get control, build up the speed--but if you try faster than you can handle you'll trip over your tongue...so be cool. Since this is a train-type rhythm, let's put in a whistle sound--this is a chord on holes #3 and #4:

(Holes #3 & #4 with tremolo)

waaaaaah waaaaaah
waaaaaah waaaaaah (back to rhythm)

()

Now try to work this into the train rhythm smoothly, so that it all fits. Listen to the example--you'll probably find that it'll work better faster--it's played slowly here so that you can separate the notes easily.

BAND SIX: Here's an exercise with a fancier rhythm. The blow chord is the same, but instead of two notes in the draw chord let's use three--two of them half the value of the other, so that the draw chord is still equal timewise to the blow chord. Dig:

(Holes #2 & #3)

da DIT-dit dah dah da DIT-dit dah dah

da DIT-dit dah dah da DIT-dit dah dah
()

Play along until you can get the rhythm smooth and solid. Let's do the same thing on the blow chord--make it three notes instead of two, but make two of them half-value, so that they're equal in time to the other. Like this:

(Holes #2 & #3)

da DIT-dit HAH-a-hah da DIT-dit HAH-a-hah
da DIT-dit HAH-a-hah (etc.)

()

Play along with this rhythm until you're at home in it. Now let's alternate these two phrases--switching from "dah dah" to "hah-a-hah" on the blow or out chord. Like this:

(Holes #2 and #3 again)

da DIT-dit dah dah da DIT-dit HAH-a-hah
da DIT-dit dah dah da DIT-dit HAH-a-hah (etc.)

Practice this until it comes naturally.

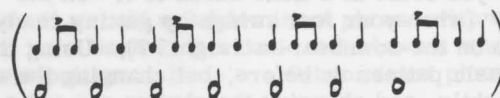
BAND SEVEN: Now what you've been doing using holes #2 and #3 is playing in a tonic chord. It's true that the blow or out chord is actually part of a Subdominant chord, but with a guitar it fits in all right with a Tonic chord--so let's call the whole phrase Tonic. Now if you were to go up and use holes #4 and #5, starting on a blow or out breath, you'd be playing what basically is a Subdominant chord. (It would fit with the Subdominant chord of a guitar without sounding discordant.) These are two of the three main chords used in a progression--so if a Dominant structure were put together, you could play a whole complete progression. Instead of chords, here's a run that will carry you through the dominant phrase:

(Hole #1)

dah DIT-dit dit dah dah DIT-dit dit dah
dah DIT-dit dit dah dah DIT-dit dit dah

(Hole #2)

dooooo dcooooo dooooo dooooo
(2)▲ (3)▲ (2)▲ (3)▲
dooooo dooooo wahhhhhhhhh (hand tremolo)
(2)▲ (3)▲ (2&3)▼

()

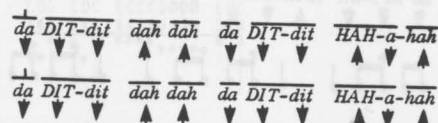
(Dig that the notes in hole #1 are the same rhythm as the preceding phrases, even though the sound is a little different.) Okay--if we put all these together now, what we'll have is a regular 12-bar blues progression, using chords and single notes. Dig these marks? (▲) The upright line on the regular

time-line indicates where the bars begin--count 'em --there's 12-- and 12-bar is one of the most frequently used blues patterns. (8-bar is the other.) Here's the whole pattern:

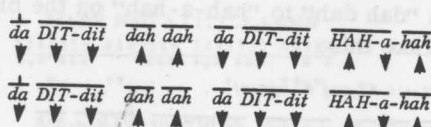
(Holes #2 & #3 tonic)



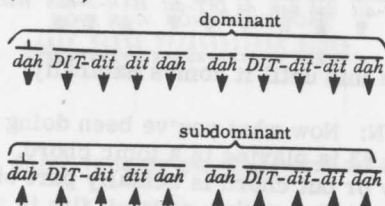
(Holes #4 & #5 subdominant)



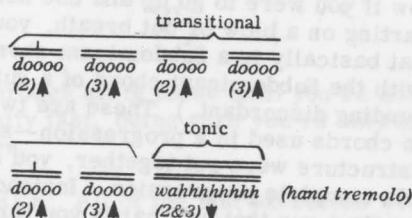
(Holes #2 & #3 tonic)



(Hole #1)



(Hole #2)



Play this through until you've got it down pat. Take your time, ain't nothing to get up tight about--and don't worry too much if your tongue keeps getting screwed up--in a while it'll get used to all this nonsense and be hanging right in there without you even thinking about it.

SIDE B

BAND ONE: The above whole pattern was built on the basic "dit dit" and "dah dah" in-and-out chord phrases--and these are good foundations for most all chord rhythm phrases. In the last exercise you came in right on the beat--you can make it jump some if you come in a little ahead of it--on the "upbeat" (when your foot swings up getting ready to tapdown on the downbeat--straight??). Using the same basic pattern as before, but changing the accent slightly, and changing the rhythm you get a different sound. It looks like this:

(Holes #2 & 3)

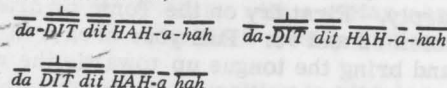


da-DIT dit DAH dah (etc.)



It's played slowly on the record so you can hear it--try playing it faster and the way it "swings" the rhythm becomes more noticeable. Again, let's change the blow or out chord to three notes instead of two. Looks and sounds like this:

(Holes #2 and #3)



Again, the way it swings is more apparent as it gets faster. Try alternating these two phrases. And see what other sort of rhythm phrases you can build from the basic "dit dit dah dah" in-and-out chords--there are a lot of possibilities.

"Experiment with using different octaves for accompanying the same chord on the guitar--for example, your main Tonic note (#2 hold draw) can also be found as a blow note in #6 hole, and a blow note in #9 hole. Your basic Sub-dominant note (#4 hole blow) can also be found in #1 hole blow, #7 hole blow...and so on. And sometimes you don't have to use the same main tone as the guitar chord--try a note on the harp that is a part of the chord, but not necessarily the main note in the chord. Experiment around on your own and see what you come up with. (Try little white pills.)"

Here are a few tonal effects. Try 'em with the record.

Play a tonic chord (draw in holes #2 and #3). Now alternate your tongue from pointing towards your teeth to the roof of your mouth. Try it on the blow chord too.

On the blow chord, make a noise with the tip of your tongue vibrating against the roof of your mouth. Dig the way it sounds. You can approximate this sound on a draw chord as well--except you do the "brrrrrr" ing on the back of your tongue using saliva--like you were trying to clear your throat.

Try a throat tremolo --you draw in the air towards your windpipe so that you can hear a little "cuk" sound. Now try to get a series of these going like a controlled spasm while drawing in on holes #2 and #3. (If you can't hack that say "ca-ca-ca-ca-ca" while taking air in.) Try it on a blow chord. It's a bit harder on a blow chord than on a draw--so maybe it's better to use the throat tremolo on the in chord and a hand tremolo on the out chord. The first Sonny Boy Williamson and many of the more country/folk-styled harp men use this sound often.

And there's the "teeth tremolo"--open your mouth just a little bit, draw in to make the Tonic chord, then make your teeth chatter the way they do when you're cold. You can get a very fast tremolo sound this way.

Try this--cover holes #1 through #5 with your lips, then with your tongue block off holes #3 and #4--you get an eerie chord that works in nicely on intros, etc.

Work on these effects--and listen to how other harpmen work them into songs--they shouldn't be used as gimmicks or to show off your technique--they should have a definite reason for being in a song--and they should contribute to and not detract

from the mood. The way to learn this is to listen. (Dig the basic record list in back here.)

BAND TWO: Now comes the most important part of blues harp playing--and maybe the hardest "bending" (or flattening) notes. First you have to be able to get clear single tones...if you can't, you'll have a lot more trouble bending than if you can.

Now draw in on the second hole, fairly hard. Notice how your tongue is in "neutral", just sort of cooling it there in the middle of your mouth? And dig how the air drawn in through the harp passes back in a straight line, over the tongue, towards the back of your throat.

Try this now: sing down the scale as low as you can go...then try to go farther. Notice how your lower jaw drops down a little and tenses? And how the whole front of your tongue drops to the bottom of your mouth cavity? Hold your lowest forced note and bring your tongue back to "neutral"--raises the pitch a little, don't it? So you see, dropping your tongue helps out some in lowering the pitch.

And this is pretty much what you do when you bend notes--you try to force or bend the column of air drawn in through the harp down. Try it: draw in on the #2 hole. Now tense your jaw a little and drop it some, bring your tongue down to the bottom of the front of your mouth, and at the same time try to suck the air through the harp towards the tip of your tongue. It also helps to narrow down the size of your lip opening--pucker up, mother! It takes a lot of wind to do this--you need about twice the pressure to bend a note to get the same volume as when not bending. Dig that the tip of your tongue curls back and down--not just down.

Any luck? If you didn't get it the first time, try again. And keep on trying--it may damn near drive you nuts--but the first time it works you'll wonder why it was such a hassle--'cause it's so easy once you get it. Some people can do it the first time--others take a long time to get it. The main thing is not to give up in disgust. If it doesn't come after a reasonable amount of work, go back and fool with some rhythm patterns or tone techniques for awhile, then come on back and try again. I had a hassle picking it up at first, but when I finally made it I was one satisfied cat.

If you play through the first four holes on the harp (one scale) you'll dig that there are two notes missing. Play it like this:

1♮ 1♭ 2♮ 2♭ 3♭ 4♮

Now do it again, only this time try to make those missing notes by "bending" (flattening) the reed next above down to the right pitch. Here's how you'd play a complete scale (the bent arrow and letter B mean "bend"):

1♮ 1♭ 2♮ 2♭ 3♭ 4♮

Try coming as close to this as you can--but don't worry if you can't do it right away. It may take awhile, but it'll give you practice on bending.

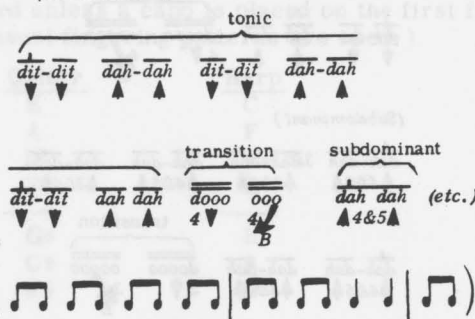
Draw notes are much easier to bend on the lower notes than on the higher ones (the higher the pitch, the shorter the reed--and the harder it becomes to control.) But with blow notes it's the opposite--high notes are fairly easy to bend as blow notes--but low ones are next to impossible.

Bending blow notes works about the same as draw notes--you have to think 'em flat--but your

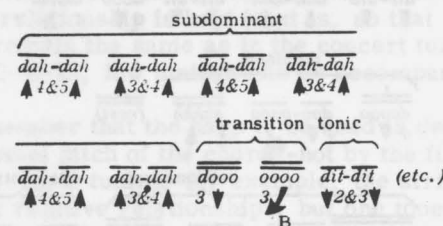
tongue, instead of dropping, tenses up and moves toward your teeth a fraction. Your lips should tighten up, making the hole smaller and you have to blow harder. Try it with the record. You'll see that it's a bit harder to control. Practice until you get controlled, unwavering and clear bent notes, both blowing and drawing. It'll take time--but don't give up.

BAND THREE: In blues, the "blue" sound comes from notes that are somewhere between being flat, and on pitch. On the harp, most of these notes will be transition notes, as you change from one chord to another--and, they're mostly draw notes. Try this--draw #4 hole, bend it down as far as you can, then switch to blow #4 hole. The bent draw note makes a nice transition from a Tonic chord to a Subdominant one. (After you've switched to blow #4 hole if you widened your lips to holes #4 and #5 you'd have a Subdominant chord.) Here's a Tonic chord pattern with a bent transitional note to a Subdominant pattern:

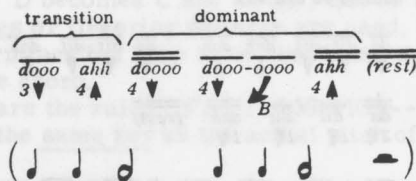
(Holes #2 & #3)



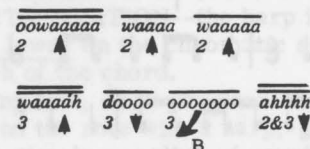
Here's a way to get back to the Tonic chord using a bent note. Draw in on hole #3, bend it down, then open up to a chord on holes #2 and #3--but drawing this time instead of bending. Starting from the beginning of the Subdominant phrase it's like this:



Now you'd stay in the Tonic chords until it was time to change to the Dominant. To do that, let's use a single note run. Looks like this (the 'rest' there means just that--cool it for two time units):



Now if we add a Subdominant phrase with a transitional bend back to the Tonic we'd have a whole complete pattern. Here's a Subdominant phrase:



Feel how it sort of leaves you hanging? Let's add some chords and a simple run on the Dominant (Sonny Terry & both Sonny Boy Williamson's use this last phrase or one much like it to end patterns often). You should recognize the chords from before. Looks like this:

(Holes #2 & #3)

da dit-dit dah dah da dit-dit dah dah
 da dit dit dah
 2 1 1 1

Putting all this together we get a complete progression, using bend notes for transitions. It works out to be 10 bars long (To make it 12 add 2 more bars to the first Tonic chord section). Try playing along, and get the bends right.

(Holes #2 & #3 Tonic)

dit-dit dah-dah dit-dit dah-dah
 dit-dit dah-dah doooo ooooo
 4 4 B

(Subdominant)

dah-dah dah-dah dah-dah dah-dah
 4&5 3&4 4&5 3&4
 dah-dah dah-dah doooo ooooo
 4&5 3&4 3 B

(Holes #2 and #3 tonic)

dit-dit dah-dah dit-dit dah-dah
 dit-dit dah-dah dit-dit doooo ahhhh
 3 4 A

dominant
 doooo doo-oooo ahhhh (rest)
 4 4 B

subdominant transition
 oooooo waaaa waaaa waaaah dooo oooo
 2 2 2 3 3 3 E
 ahhhh
 2&3

(Holes #2 and #3)

da dit-dit dah dah da dit-dit dah dah
 da dit dit dah (rest)
 2 1 1 1

da dit-dit dah dah da dit-dit dah dah
 da dit dit dah (rest)
 2 1 1 1

Play this over several times until you get used to using bends as part of a progression. This is a good time to stop and evaluate--see where you're at. A good time to review everything you've learned up to now. Try putting some bend notes into the other patterns used, experiment with rhythms--do the whole thing.

BAND FOUR: By now you dig that a "position" in blues harp means the key you play it in--and where you find your starting note, or tonic note. Remember in all positions, you're always playing in the same key as the guitar, but you're using harps tuned in different keys. Supposedly, you could play in 8 positions (since there are 8 tones in the octaves on these harps--in other words a diatonic octave)--but in practice you'd find that many of the wrong notes would need to be bent, chords would be hard if not impossible, etc. So there are for practical purposes four main positions. Third position is a style favored by musicians who work in the sound of Chicago blues. In third you play a harp tuned two steps down (to the left) on the chromatic scale from the key of the guitar. In other words--when the guitar is played in the key of D, you'd play third position using a C harp. Here are the basic tones in the key of D:

D draw #4 hole (Tonic)
 G blow #3 hole (Subdominant)
 A draw #6 hole (Dominant)

Try playing with the example which uses only the basic tones. The chord changes are: D (draw #4 hole), G (blow #3 hole), D (draw #4 hole), A (draw #6 hole), G (blow #3 hole) and D (draw #4 hole) (Also check the reference section for tone holes used for all four positions).

That's just the bones of it--when you're actually playing you'll get fancier. Take hold of the harp with your free hand and move it back and forth, parallel to your lips while drawing in on holes #4 and #5. You'll get a warble that will work behind the tonic chord. Try this effect on other chords--it works in all positions. Listen to the example showing a progression using this warble, and bent notes. Try playing any 12-bar blues in third position--experiment using various effects and warbles. You'll notice that this works best on Chicago-styled blues. (On Checker LP 1437 (Down And Out Blues) Sonny Boy Williamson is playing a C harp in third position on I DON'T KNOW--try working out with it.)

BAND FIVE: Fourth position gives you another key to play a harp in (so far we've played a C harp in three keys- C, G, and D)--here's how it works. You're still in the same key as the guitar, but you use a harp tuned four steps below the guitar key on the chromatic scale. When the guitar is played in E, count down (to the left) four steps starting with D# and you land on C--the correct harp key to use when playing fourth position in the key of E. In this position, several keys turn out to need harps tuned in sharpened keys, so they can't be accompanied. (See table.) Here are the basic tones in the key of E:

E blow #2 hole (Tonic)
 A draw #6 hole (Subdominant)
 B7 draw #3 hole (Dominant)

Try playing along with the basic example. Chord changes: E (blow #2 hole), A (draw #6 hole), E (blow #2 hole), B7 (draw #3 hole), A (draw #6 hole) and E (blow #2 hole).

Again, in actual practice you'll get a lot fancier than just these basic tones--sometimes even using other tones in place of them. Here's a run that

sounds nice for the Tonic part of the progression:

dooco doooooo waaaaah
3 3 2

On the Tonic, use a chord--blow out on holes #2 and #3 and add a warble. On the Subdominant portion--instead of drawing in on #6 hole, blow out through holes #4 and #5, with the warble. Even though this isn't the exact tone for the chord it still fits with a guitar. Try a chord on the Dominant too--draw in on holes #3 and #4--add the warble. Listen to the example which shows use of some warbles and bent notes--dig how much you can fool with the basic tone patterns and still have it sound okay. This is another good position for Chicago-styled blues. Try playing with records or guitar men using fourth position--you'll find it comes in handy now and then.

BAND SIX: Listen to these two examples. Both are with the guitar in G, using a C harp in crossed position. Notice how the warbles and bends are worked in--also the hand tremolo. The second example shows how the "dit/dit dah/dah" pattern can be used for chord accompanying. Dig how some chords are cut off, some aren't. This should give you some idea of how to work in the various effects and techniques you've used. But it's only a beginning--you need to listen to a lot of blues before you'll be able to really work out playing yourself. Remember, all you've learned up to now are tools--now comes the time when you can put them to work--but don't just stop at imitating someone else's style, learn to make your own style tell your own story.

It's a lot of work, but a lot of kicks too.
Go thou and blow now.

GUITAR/HARP RELATIONSHIPS

QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

Like the title says, this section is mainly for reference--don't try to absorb it all at once. The only table you'll really need to know to begin with is the one for crossed harp in standard tuning--that's the one most frequently used.

STANDARD TUNING -- CONCERT PITCH

The E strings are tuned to E, and the others in the usual fashion--i. e. E-A-D-G-B-E.

FIRST OR STRAIGHT POSITION

Use a harp tuned in the same key that the guitar is playing.

SECOND or CROSSED POSITION

Use a harp tuned five steps (on the chromatic scale) above the key that the guitar is playing. Or, use a harp of the same tuning as the subdominant chord for the guitar key.

Guitar	Harp
E	A
A	D
G	C
D	G
C	F
F	B-flat
B	E

THIRD POSITION

(Use a harp tuned two steps below (on the chromatic scale) the key that the guitar is playing. In this position the key of F-natural isn't possible--however if the guitar is capoed one fret and F fingering patterns are used the actual pitch becomes F#--which is possible.)

Guitar	Harp
E	D
A	G
G	F
D	C
C	B-flat
B	A
F#	E

FOURTH POSITION

(Use a harp tuned four steps below (on the chromatic scale) the key that the guitar is playing in. In this position the keys of G, C and F-natural can't be accompanied unless a capo is placed on the first fret and the usual fingering patterns are used.)

Guitar	Harp
E	C
A	F
D	B-flat
B	G
G#	E
C#	A
F#	D

"LOW" AND OTHER TUNINGS

Some guitar players prefer to keep their strings tuned below concert pitch, so as to lessen the tension on the guitar neck and top, but as long as the same relative relationship is kept (that is, so that the intervals remain the same as in the concert tuning of E-A-D-G-B-E), low tunings can be accompanied with a harp.

Remember that the harp to be used is determined by the actual pitch of the chord--not by the fingering position. (In D tuning, for example, the strings have the same relative relationships, but one tone down (D-G-C-F-A-D)... the same intervals are kept but the whole setup is a tone lower. A guitar in D, when played with E fingering works--but an E chord has an actual pitch of D... and this is true of all other chord positions in this tuning; an A chord has an actual pitch of G, D becomes C and so on.) But no matter what tunings or fingering patterns are used, only one thing determines the harp to be used--and the actual pitch of the chord.

Here are the rules: **FIRST POSITION**--the harp is always the same key as the actual pitch of the chord.

SECOND POSITION--the harp is always tuned five steps higher on the chromatic scale than the actual pitch of the chord.

THIRD POSITION--the harp is always tuned two steps lower on the chromatic scale than the actual pitch of the chord.

FOURTH POSITION--the harp is always tuned four steps lower on the chromatic scale than the actual pitch of the chord.

Knowing this, once you know the actual pitch of a chord (find the note with a harp, guitar, whatever) it becomes simply a matter of counting to determine

which harp to use to accompany in any position. And this works for any tuning in which the usual intervals such as E-A-D-G-B-E are kept.

HARP POSITIONS--BASIC PATTERNS

These are repeated for quick reference. An arrow pointing down means draw, an arrow pointing up means blow--and the number is the hole used.

FIRST POSITION

tonic	subdominant	dominant
4 ↑	5 ↓	3 ↑

SECOND (CROSSED) POSITION

tonic	subdominant	dominant
2 ↓	4 ↑	4 ↓

THIRD POSITION

tonic	subdominant	dominant
4 ↓	3 ↑	6 ↓

FOURTH POSITION

tonic	subdominant	dominant
2 ↑	6 ↓	3 ↓

DISCOGRAPHY

The LP's listed below all have harp on them, and all should be easily available. The order is roughly chronological. Where an artist has many LP's on the market, only my favorites are listed.

REALLY! THE COUNTRY BLUES. Origin Jazz Library, OJL-2. (39 Remsen St. (1E) Brooklyn Heights 1, N. Y.) Contains one cut (TOUCH ME LIGHT MAMA) by George "Bullet" Williams worth the price of the whole LP.

THE GREAT JUG BANDS. Origin Jazz Library, OJL-4. Ten of the fifteen cuts have harp on them by people like Noah Lewis, Will Shade, Jaybird Coleman and others. This is a fine sampling of jug-band styled harp.

SLEEPY JOHN ESTES, 1929-40. RBF 8. Four of the twelve cuts have the harp of Hammie Nixon with John. More recent work of both can be found on various Delmark LP's (Delmark Records, 7 West Grand, Chicago 10, Ill.).

LEADBELLY MEMORIAL, VOL. I. Stinson, SLP 17. Five of the twelve cuts have Sonny Terry at his best.

LEADBELLY SINGS FOLK SONGS. Folkways, FA 2488. Three cuts with Sonny Terry--and a groovy OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN.

CHAIN GANG BLUES, VOL. I & II. Stinson, SLPX 7. Sonny Terry with Goody Guthrie and Alec Stewart. Contains a great version of LOST JOHN.

HARMONICA & VOCAL SOLOS. Folkways, FP 35. A 10" LP with some fine solo work by Sonny Terry.

POSSUM UP A SIMMON TREE. Folk-Lyric, FL 107. Snooks Eaglin's vocal and guitar backed by the folk country harp of Percy Randolph on six of the fifteen cuts.

J. D. SHORT & SON HOUSE. Folkways, FA 2467. Short has one side of this LP to himself, playing both harp and guitar.

STAVIN CHAIN BLUES. Delmark 609. J. D. Short's mournful harp with his own vocals and accompanying guitar vocal work by Big Joe Williams.

JESSE FULLER. Good Time Jazz 12031. The one-man band-with harp and kazoo.

SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON (I) Blues Classics, 3 (Box 5073 Berkeley 5, Calif.). The backing ranges from guitars to a full band. The beginnings of R&B.

SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON (Rice Miller) Blues Classics 9. 16 cuts featuring the harp and vocals of the "original" Sonny Boy at the peak of his form with full driving energy. **MIGHTY LONG TIME** is worth the price of the whole LP... borrow or steal, but **GET THIS SIDE!** (Although the title listed may not be used, you can order by number--release date is set for fall, 1965.)

DOWN AND OUT BLUES. Checker, LP 1437. Sonny Boy Williamson II with a sampling of R&B from the mid-fifties.

THE BLUES ROLL ON. Atlantic 1352. Four cuts by Forest City Joe (who patterned himself after the Sonny Boy I) and two by a harpman called Boy Blue. Both with country R&B backing.

THE BEST OF LITTLE WALTER. Chess 1428. Twelve cuts--four of them instrumental. A good sampling of Chicago R&B. Walter also accompanies Muddy Waters on **THE BEST OF MUDDY WATERS** Chess LP 1427 on several cuts.

ROOSTER BLUES. Excello 80000. The harp of Lazy Lester with vocals by Lightning Slim. R&B gone back to Louisiana.

HOWLING WOLF: MOANING IN THE MOONLIGHT. Chess 1434. Wolf plays funky harp with down-home backing on all twelve cuts.

JIMMY REED: THE LEGEND AND THE MAN. Vee-Jay 8501. Twelve cuts, eleven with the "high head harp" by the master of lazy Chicago blues.

This list is by no means complete, but it covers a pretty thorough span of styles and time. Dig all of them and you'll have heard a lot of the best.