

Teach In: Harmonica

by Glenn Weiser

Glenn Weiser is a harmonica player from Albany, NY. If playing fiddle tunes on the harmonica is your thing, be sure to check out Glenn's book, aptly titled *Fiddle Tunes for the Harmonica* (available from Centerstream Publishing, P.O. Box 5450, Fullerton, CA 92635). It's \$16.95 and includes a cassette.

Celtic Harp Tunes For Harmonica

Instead of a dance tune, here's a slow air to try this time. "Blind Mary," by the Irish harper Turlough O'Carolan, is a plaintive tune probably written for a fellow harper of that name who lived in his locality. Slow airs offer a good chance to use the tremolo technique, which is a rapid opening and shutting of the hands as they are cupped around the harmonica. This produces a fluctuation of the intensity of a pitch which is used to enliven the long notes in a tune. To do the tremolo correctly, the hands must be held in the position shown in the photographs, which I will also briefly describe:

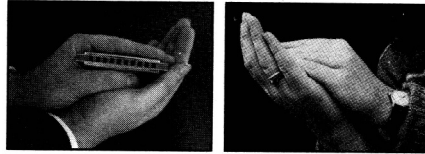
Place the harmonica in between the thumb and index finger of the left hand (or right hand if you're a lefty). The left end of the harmonica should be against the web of the left palm. Then bend your right hand back from your wrist and diagonally cover it with your left hand in such a way that an airtight space is formed by the two hands. The fingers of the right hand can either curl around the left hand or be held straight, but in either case they should be held

together, with the right thumb against the right index finger.

Now blow a note, rapidly opening and closing the hands. The note should take on a quivering quality. If you fail at first to produce a good tremolo, check your hand position for openings through which air might be escaping, as any leaks will deplete the tremolo's intensity.

In "Blind Mary," the tremolo is to be used on all notes greater than an eighth note in length. I find that the tremolo tends to muddy the sound of the shorter notes, so keep the hands still (either open or closed is fine) when you are playing the eighth notes.

If you have any questions about this or any other of the harmonica workshops, feel free to write me at P.O. Box 2551 ESP, Albany, NY 12220. Happy Harpin'!



*SO!

Blind Mary

Turlough O'Carolan (1670 ~ 1738)
Arranged by Glenn Weiser

♩ = 72

6 7 7 ⑦ ⑥ 6 5 ⑤ 6 ⑥ 6 5 ④ 5 ⑤ 6 8 8 ⑧

7 ⑥ 6 4 ④ 5 ⑤ ④ 4 4 7 ⑧ 8 ⑨ 8 ⑥ ⑧ ⑦ 6 ⑥ ⑦

7 4 4 ④ 5 ④ 6 ⑤ 5 ⑤ 6 7 8 ⑧ 7 4 ④ 5 ⑤ ④ 4

G

4