

**Dieter Kropp's**

**Blues Harp Songbook**

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# Preface

A warm welcome to Dieter Kropp's Blues Harp Songbook. I'm happy that you're interested in the blues harp, an extraordinary instrument that continues to fascinate so many people all over the world because it offers various sound possibilities and can be used in a wide range of musical contexts.

Perhaps you've been curious before and we met at one of my blues harp workshops or concerts. And maybe you have even tried to play a children's song – but that wasn't a real blues song,

was it? In order to play the blues, you need specific skills on the instrument. Of course you should know where the notes are located on the instrument. This book will show you both, step by step. We start with the scale exercise "Nice & Easy". With these notes, you can play simple little melodies. Try it out with the "Skip To My Lou" tune. That's fun! But this book is basically about quickly introducing you to the playing techniques used in blues and shows you how to refine and polish these.

Especially the workshops and all my students have contributed a lot to the creation of this book. They helped me to recognize which tips and tricks are needed to enable and facilitate the beginner's approach to the instrument and to the whole topic. The result is right in front of you. This book truly includes all basic playing techniques needed to play the blues on your harp. You will find explanations on subjects like the playing of single notes, 1st position/straight harp, the basic 12-bar blues pattern, 2nd position / cross harp, bending, tremolo, wah-wah effects, blue notes, diaphragm vibrato, larynx vibrato and many more. These techniques will be explained in the text parts so that it will be easier for you to understand what is going on in the music. This way, you will get an overview without being overwhelmed. Each tune will present you with another or an additional technique. Furthermore, everything you have learned before will be reviewed so that your basic knowledge can set in.

The guitar rhythms played by Michael van Merwyk will carry you through the tunes almost effortlessly. You will see that your breath will be flowing easily through the instrument and the tones will come out almost on their own. Is this wishful thinking or a dream? Well, you need to practise a little bit to grasp all the tricks which make our harp sound real good. But, these tricks can be found in this book. I'm not going to keep any secrets. Promise!

The notation and harp tablatures for the tunes will help you play through the tunes. Some things will work fine right away; others need a little more or even very intense practise.





Even if your playing sounds good in the beginning without any bending, you won't be able to do without later because this playing technique determines the blues playing on Richter harmonicas. The conscious use of bending will be a major target you should try to approach. If you run into problems, don't give up. It is really difficult to integrate bending and will probably take some months of playing to achieve the sound you can hear on the included CD. Don't get discouraged, but see this as a motivation! The bending and warm-up exercises will be your solid support for a fast progress.

Get even more motivated by listening to as many blues recordings with harp accompaniment as possible. Get the CDs, go to concerts – listen, listen, listen! Under this keyword at the end of the book, you will find my personal favorite players and a small selection of their CDs – a good source of inspiration!

Listening on the one hand and playing of course on the other! Frequent playing will automatically improve your breathing technique. Over the course of time, a lot of things will become easier for you because your body has to get used to the new requirements first, for instance, the breathing. Give yourself some time.

Well, and now let's start! I wish you much fun practising and hope you will enjoy discovering the possibilities of this wonderful instrument.

Let it ring!

Dieter Kropp