

The Harmonica in Traditional Irish Music.



Other names for the Harmonica.

- ◆ Mouth Organ
 - ◆ Tin Sandwich
 - ◆ Moothie
 - ◆ Orgán Béil
 - ◆ Gob Iron
 - ◆ Sook n' Blaw
 - ◆ French Harp
 - ◆ Mississippi
 - ◆ Harp
 - ◆ French Fiddle
 - ◆ Saxophone
 - ◆ Harpoon
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Types of Harmonica available.

◆ Diatonic

◆ Chromatic

◆ Tremelo

◆ Octave

◆ Chord

◆ Bass



Diatonic Harmonica.



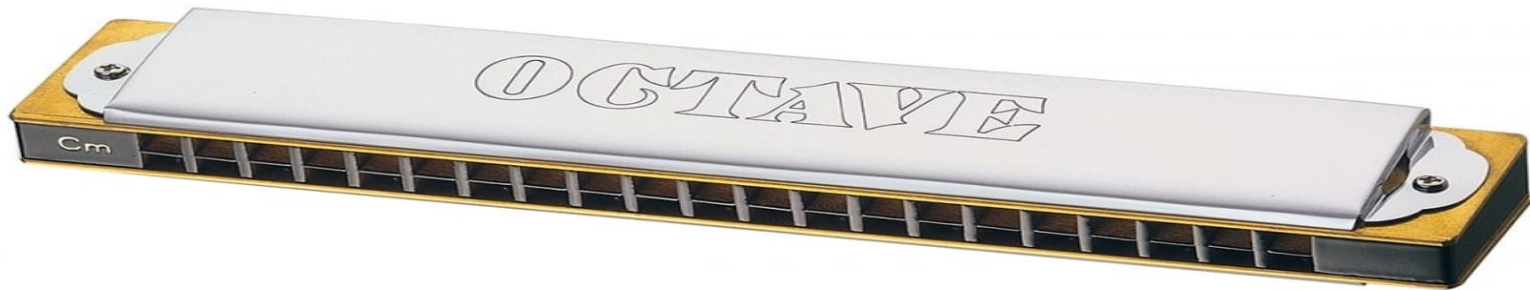
Chromatic Harmonica Types.



Tombo and Seydel Tremelo Harmonica.



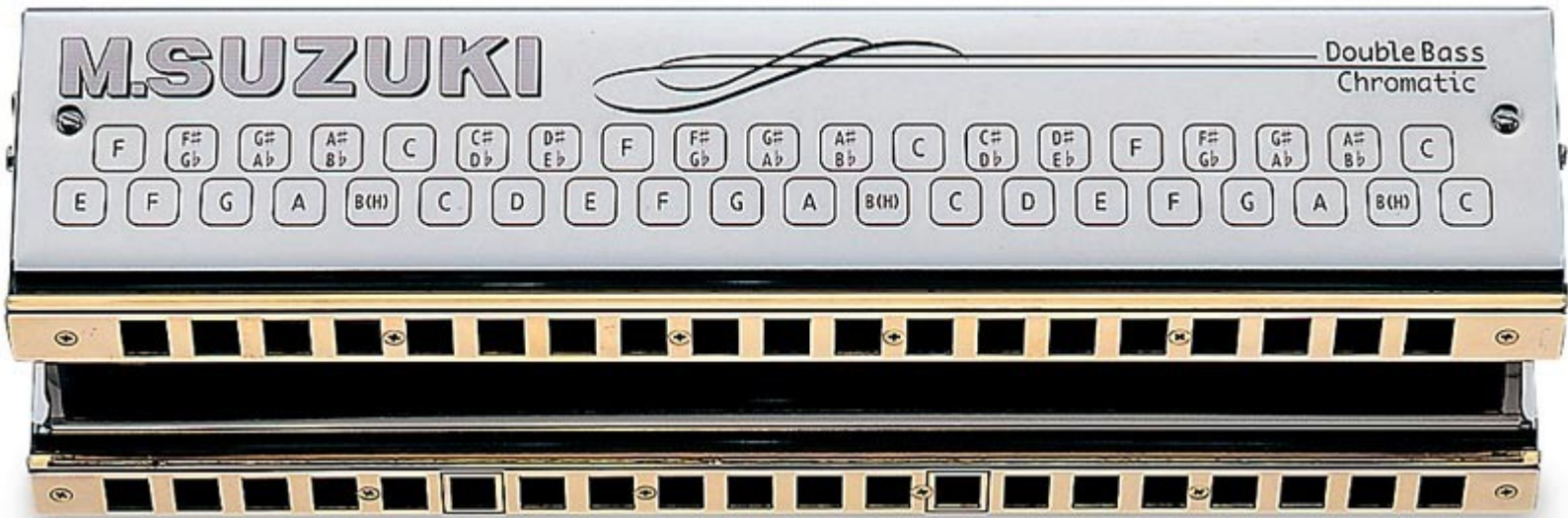
Octave Harmonica.



Chord Harmonica.



Bass Harmonica.



Diatonic or Blues Harp.

- ◆ Hohner Special 20



- ◆ Ten Holes
- ◆ 20 Reeds
- ◆ Three Octave
- ◆ Note Bending
- ◆ Incomplete Scales
- ◆ Some Chords
- ◆ Alternate Tunings



G Diatonic note layout.

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

Only easy full G scale.

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E



Possible bends on G Diatonic.

							Bb	Eb	F
									F#
G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E
Ab	Db	F	Ab	B	Eb				
	C	E							
		Eb							



Available Chords on G Diatonic.

G major chord

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

D major chord *A minor chord*

Paddy Richter Tuning on G Diatonic.

New note

G	B	E	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

Paddy Richter Tuning.


- ◆ *E* note is easier to play.
 - ◆ Can be used in a Triplet.
 - ◆ Blow 3 reed needs to be Tuned up a Tone.
 - ◆ Changes the first *G* Chord in first octave.
 - ◆ Requires learning a new position.
 - ◆ Affects 3-6 Octave.
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Melody Maker Tuning on G Diatonic.

New note

G	B	E	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C#	E	F#	A	C#	E

New note *New note*



Melody Maker G Diatonic.

- ◆ Needs three reeds tuned.
 - ◆ One up a tone and two up a semitone.
 - ◆ More useful for playing *D* major position.
 - ◆ Loss of 1st *G* major chord and *A* minor chord.
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G Country tuned.

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C#	E	F#	A	C	E

New note



G Diatonic Country Tuned[Alternative].

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C#	E	F#	A	C#	E

New note

New note



Country Tuned.

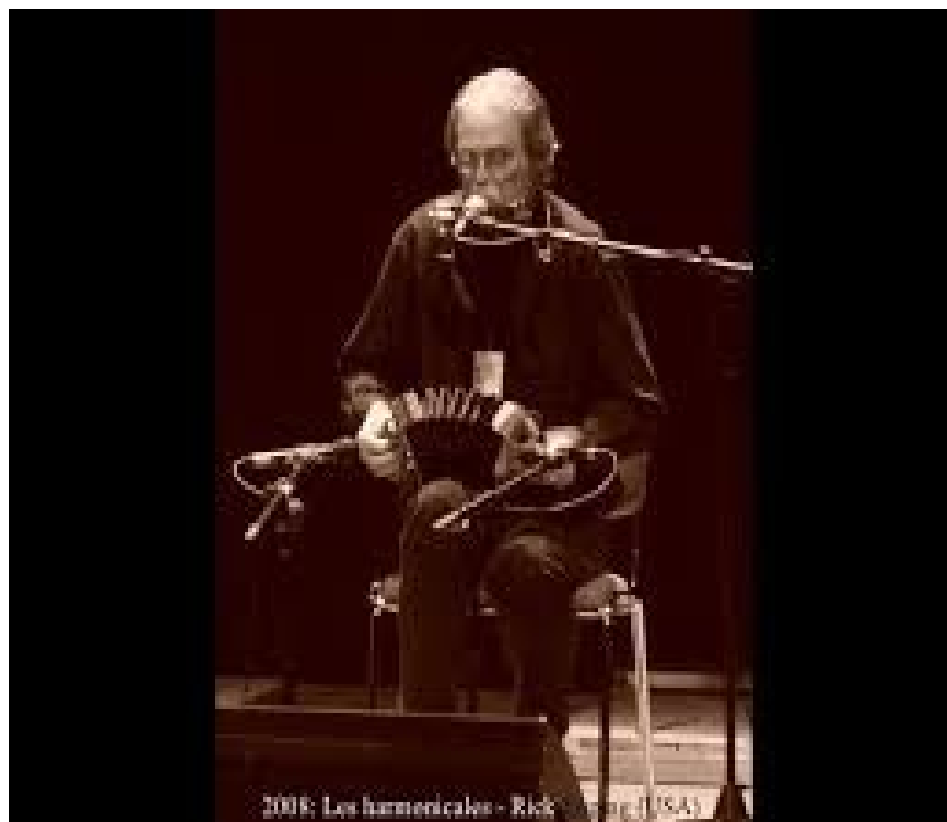
- ◆ Useful tuning for *D* major tunes.
 - ◆ Especially *Airs* or slow tunes in general.
 - ◆ New tuned notes can also be bent.
 - ◆ Has *G* major, *D* major and *A* major chords.
 - ◆ Needs two reeds tuned up one Semitone
 - ◆ Only one easy Octave of *G* scale.
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G Country tuned chords.

G major chord

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	D	F#	A	C#	E	F#	A	C#	E
<i>D major chord</i>			<i>A major chord</i>			<i>A major chord</i>			

Rick Epping.



NEW ROAD

STONE WALLS & STREET LIGHTS



Sé fáth mo bhuartha.

- ◆ Probably one of the finest recordings of this harmonica tuning in Traditional Irish music is *Sé fáth mo bhuartha* from the Pumpkinhead album, played by Rick Epping.
 - ◆ Besides being an inspiration to harmonica players Rick is a world leader when it comes to harmonica customising.
 - ◆ The harmonica fraternity in general and cutomisers worldwide owe a lot to Rick's innovations regarding the advancement of this sometimes troublesome instrument.
 - ◆ His knowledge and generosity knows no bounds when it comes to imparting helpful tips that will improve the players technique or the playability of the instrument.
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Easy Third Tuning.

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	C	E	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

New notes



Easy Third Tuning.

- ◆ Used by Rick Epping and Joel Andersson to great effect.
 - ◆ Easy *G major* and relevant *A minor* chords
 - ◆ Easy *G major* and *A minor* scales.
 - ◆ Missing 7th note [F#] in first Octave.
 - ◆ Experienced players can get around this.
 - ◆ Lower octave playing possible on 2-5 and 3-6.
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Easy Third Tuning chords.

G major chord

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	C	E	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

A minor chord



Playable Octaves.

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	C	E	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	C	E	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	C	E	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E



Easy Third Tuning.

- ◆ The problem of the missing 7th or F# in the first octave can be overcome by playing a valved Diatonic, allowing 4 Blow to be bent down to F#.
- ◆ Valved harmonicas like Rick Epping's XB 40 or Brendan Power's Extrabend harmonica could be tuned to Easy Third.



Solo Tuned Harmonica.

			↓	↓			↓	↓	
G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G	G	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C

Solo Tuned.

- ◆ Two and a half octaves of **G** scale.
 - ◆ Possible to play **Em** and **Am**.
 - ◆ Easy **D** Mixolydian scale.
 - ◆ You have to deal with double **G**'s.
 - ◆ Loss of **D** major chord.
 - ◆ Limited bends unless Valved.
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Auto Valve Octave[Solo or Easy tuned].



Auto Valve Octave[Solo or EasyThird].

- ◆ Can be retuned to Solo or Easy Third for Trad.
 - ◆ 260 mouthpiece can be added for comfort of playing.
 - ◆ Rick Epping and Joel Andersson use Auto Valve Octaves.
 - ◆ Can also be constructed from spare Chromatic plates.
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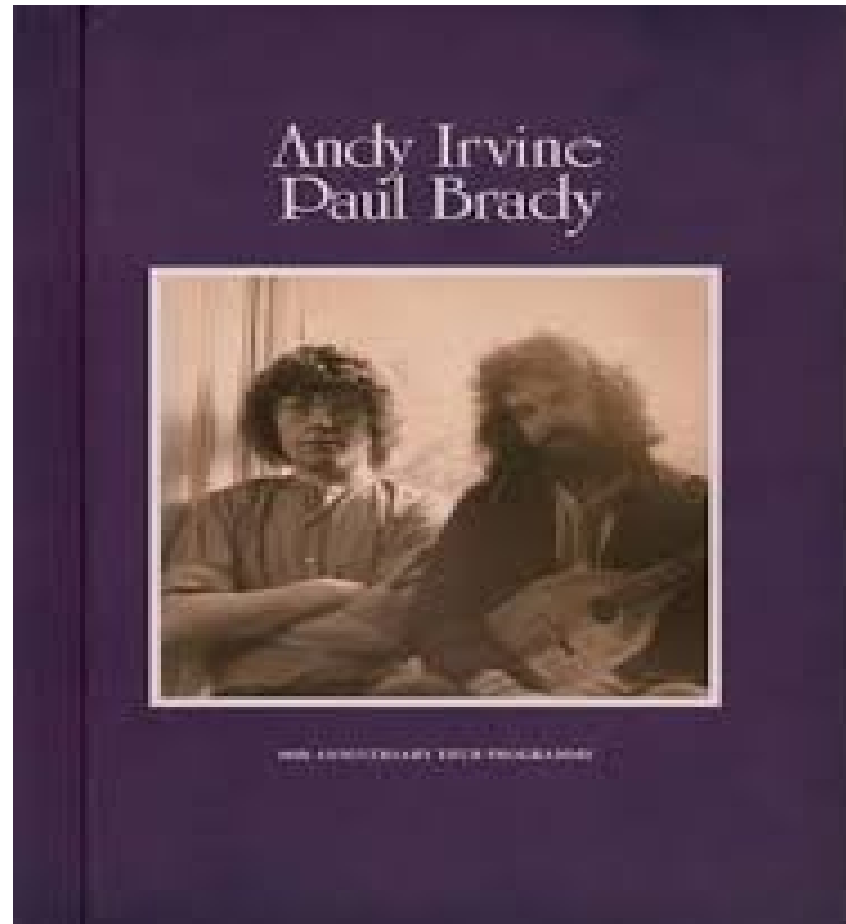
Auto Valve.

- ◆ New improved combs for Auto Valve can be purchased from Brendan Power's website.
 - ◆ No real bends on this harmonica as it is Valved.
 - ◆ Great playing volume at sessions. I use Solo tuned G and D.
 - ◆ Harder to get AV reedpates.
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Unaltered Diatonic.

- ◆ It is possible to play trad tunes on an unaltered Diatonic. However, you have to approach with care. Certain tunes are just not possible to play legato on Diatonic because of the tuning layout. Players like Rick Epping and Andy Irvine have recorded tunes that incorporate some bends, but they are experienced players with a knowledge of tunes that suit. Paul Moran plays Tremelo, but has also recorded some great tunes on unaltered Diatonic. Tunes in 1st Position work well but there are also some great tunes in 2nd and 3rd Position.
 - ◆ Moll Rua- Hardiman the Fiddler-The Blarney Pilgrim.....
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Andy Irvine.



Chromatic Harmonica Reversed Slide.

- ◆ Used by Philippe Gehanne, Joel Bernstein, Mark Graham, Don Meade and yours truly.
 - ◆ Most influential players in this style are Eddie Clarke and Seán Walsh.
 - ◆ Tom Byrne plays without reversing.
 - ◆ Reversing the slide is not all that is required.
 - ◆ For D you need C# and D reedplates.
 - ◆ For G you need F# and G reedplates.
 - ◆ Hohner 270 is compatible with this method.
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Normal G chromatic.

G Chromatic Slide out.

G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#

G Chromatic Slide in.

G#	C	D#	G#	G#	C	D#	G#	G#	C	D#	G#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A#	C#	F	G	A#	C#	F	G	A#	C#	F	G

Reversed G Chromatic.

G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#

G Reversed Chromatic Slide in.

F#	Bb	C#	F#	F#	Bb	C#	F#	F#	Bb	C#	F#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Ab	B	Eb	F	Ab	B	Eb	F	Ab	B	Eb	F

Advantages of Reversed Slide Chromatic.

- ◆ Fully Chromatic instrument.
 - ◆ Scales stay the same across the instrument.
 - ◆ Clean melodic playing.
 - ◆ Can be played in Octaves.
 - ◆ Three notes of scale occur on several holes.
 - ◆ Easier Triplets with Button.
 - ◆ Instrument is valved (Better compression).
 - ◆ Can be Half -Valved for bending.
 - ◆ Can be constructed in 10 to 16 hole versions.
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Disadvantages.

- ◆ Problems with Slide mechanism.
 - ◆ Trouble with sticky Valves.
 - ◆ Certain keys are difficult to play.
 - ◆ Limited regarding Chords.
 - ◆ Generally only G/F# model available.
 - ◆ Maintenance skills are necessary.
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New easy to reach notes.

F#		C#	F#	F#		C#	F#	F#			F#
G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#
	B				B				B		

Triplets: GF#G [All Blow] CBA [All Draw] DC#D [All Blow]

Scales: D modal or Myolidian - 7th is C natural.

D Major - 7th is C# - Can now be played on same hole as tonic D.

G scale entails picking the appropriate one of the double G's.

Arpeggios: D Major- **D F# A D'**

Now instead of two Draw notes together **F#** and **A** we can use one of our new easier **F#**'s in the Blow position.

Eddie Clarke.



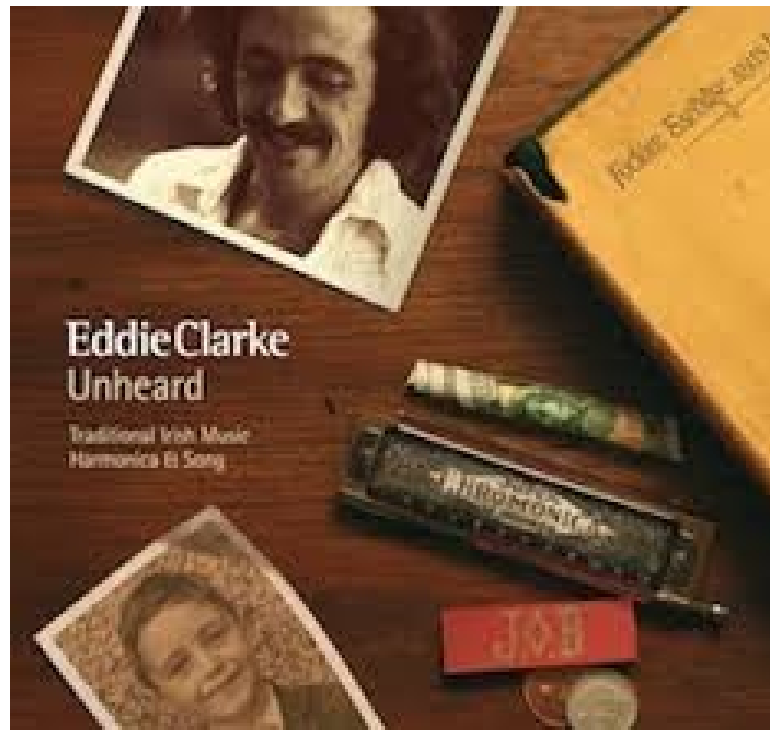
Eddie Clarke.

- ◆ From Virginia County Cavan.
 - ◆ Three CD's available.
 - ◆ Used C/C# harmonica **only** to play D, G, A and relevant minors.
 - ◆ Held Slide in. Strong rhythm. Great solo performer.
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Crossroads.

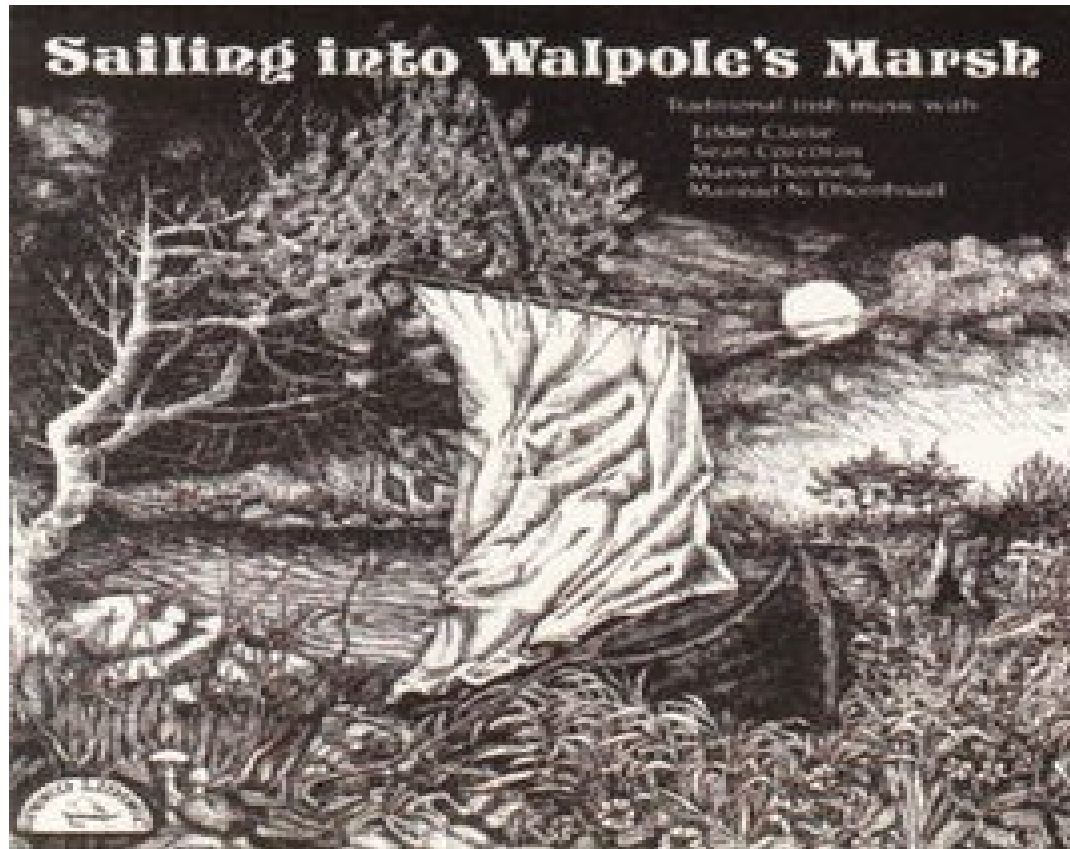


Unheard.

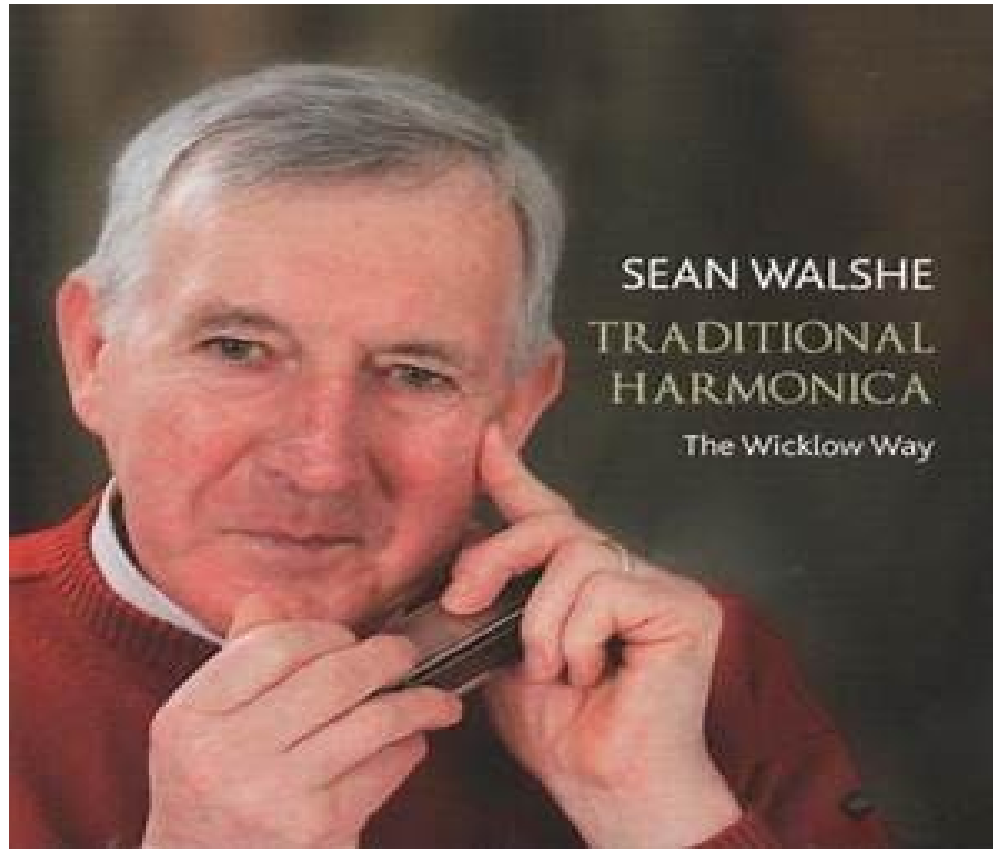


Sailing into Walpole's Marsh

Traditional Irish music with
Eddie Cleary
Seán Connolly
Maura Donnelly
Mairéad Ní Dhomhnaill



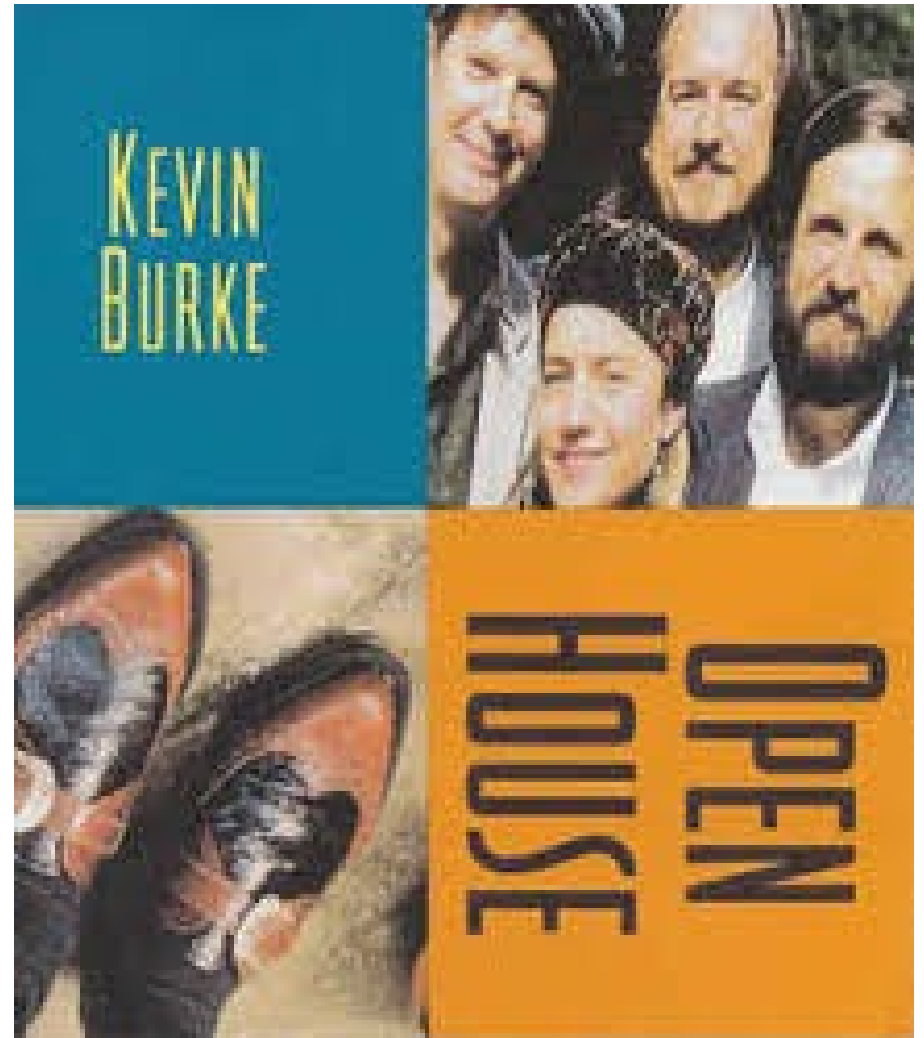
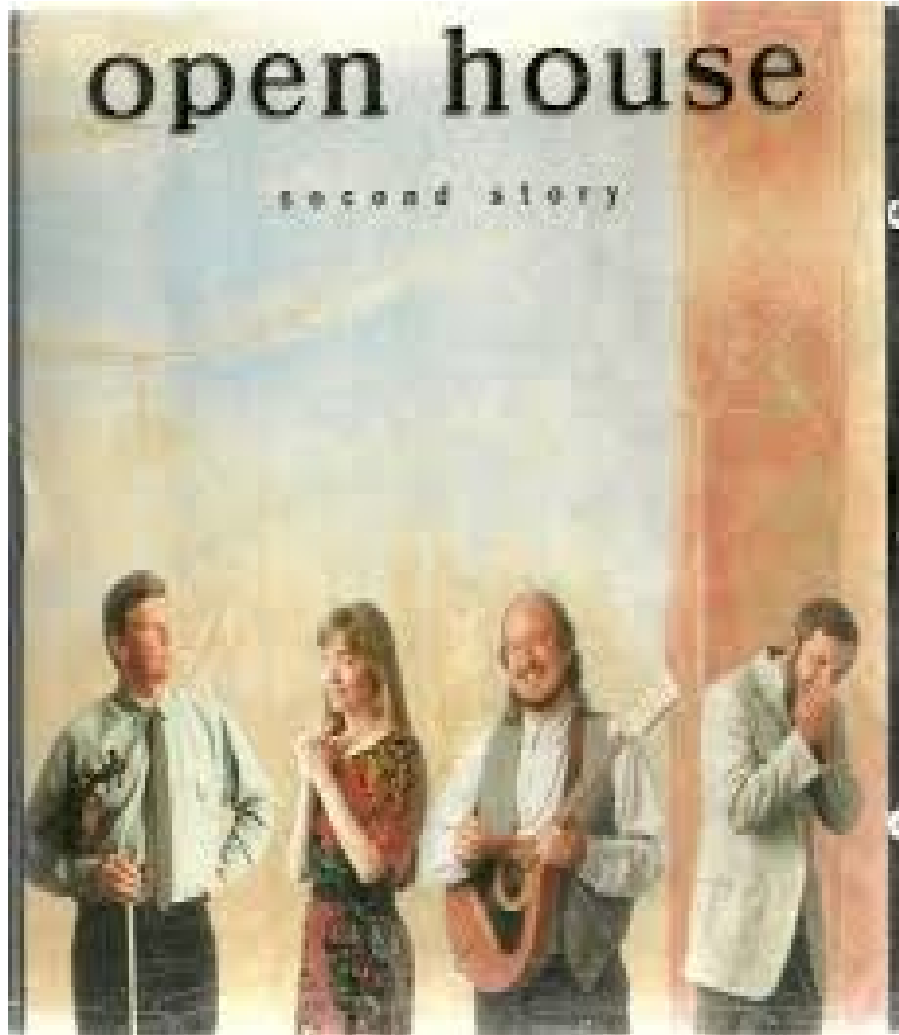
Séan Walsh [Reversed 1st Position].



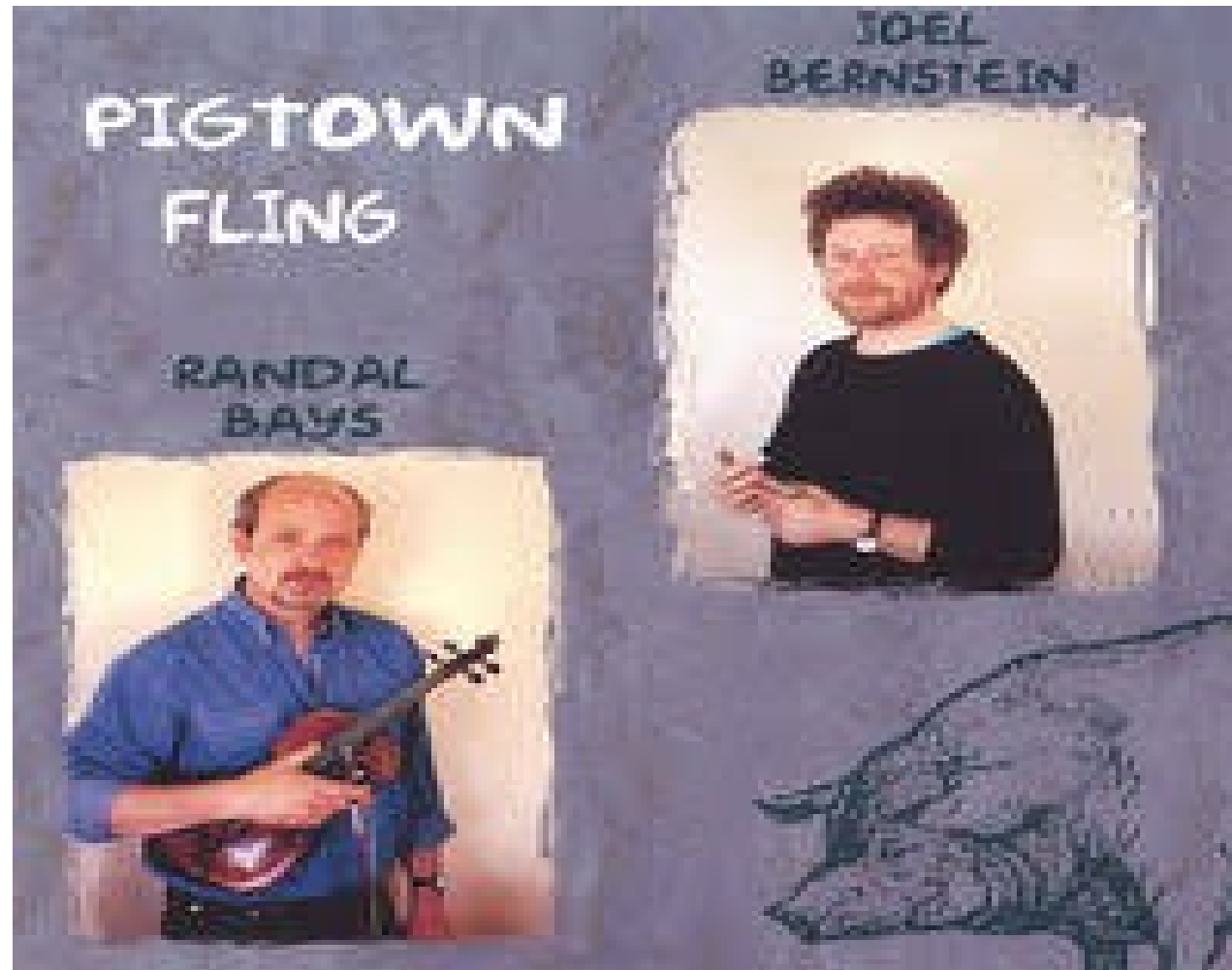
Mark Graham [Chromatic/Diatonic].



Mark Graham.



Joel Bernstein [Chromatic/Diatonic].



Don Meade [Reversed Chromatic].



Don Meade.

- ◆ Well known Traditional multi-instrumentalist and music historian. Don has written a fine short history of the harmonica in Trad/Celtic music. Very informative piece.

*The Harmonica and Irish Traditional Music
by Don Meade.*

- ◆ Available online:

http://blarneystar.com/HARMONICA_030912X.pdf

Iron Lung.



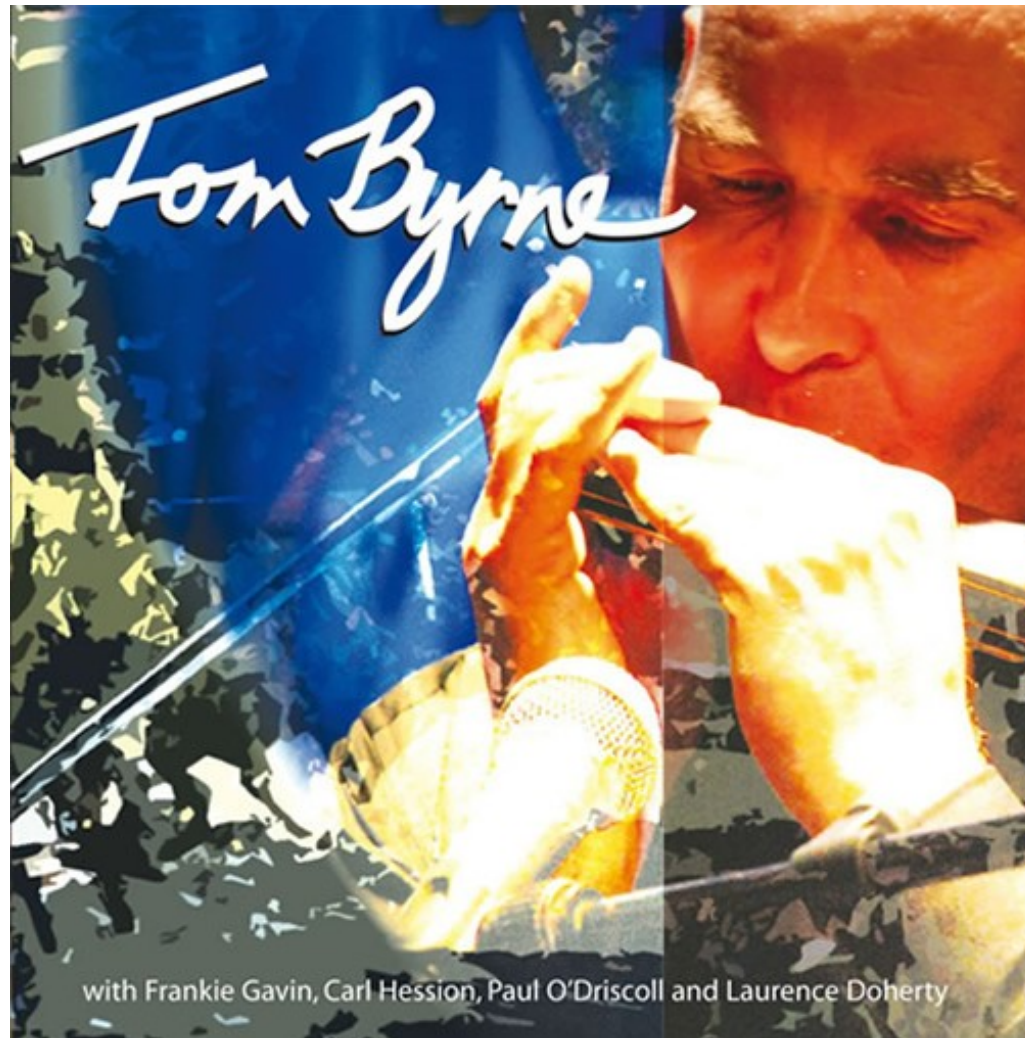
2008: Les harmonicales - Masterclass with Brendan, Rick and Mick

Triple Harp Bypass.

iron lung
TRIPLE HARP BYPASS



Straight Chromatic.



Brendan Power.



Brendan Power.

- ◆ New Irish Harmonica.
New approach and distinctive sound.
Modified harmonicas.
 - ◆ Important figure in the modernisation of the instrument.
Innovative player.
 - ◆ Has influenced the popularity of Irish music on harmonica worldwide.
 - ◆ Original member of Riverdance.
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Brendan Power Trad tuning.

- ◆ Brendan experiments with a lot of different tunings.
 - ◆ *Paddy Richter* and *Scale tuning*(or combination) are just two of his many tunings.
 - ◆ Diatonic and Chromatic harmonicas, already tuned can be purchased from Brendan.
 - ◆ Or you can also get a customiser to do the work.
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Brendan Power Scale-tuning.

Slide Out

G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G	G	B	D	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#

Slide In: Up to next note in Scale.

A	C	E	A	A	C	E	A	A	C	E	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
B	D	F#	G	B	D	F#	G	B	D	F#	G



Scale Tuning.

- ◆ Ornamentation now goes up to next note of G scale.
 - ◆ *G* up to *A*, *B* up to *C* and so on.
 - ◆ Can be half-valved to allow bending.
 - ◆ Loss of Chromatic capability, except through bending.
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The Tremelo Harmonica.

- ◆ Most popular harmonica for Trad.
 - ◆ Available in a myriad of Major, Minor and Flat Keys.
 - ◆ Tombo most preferred model.
 - ◆ Full scale available.
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Key of G Tombo 21 hole layout.

Blow notes **Blow**

Draw notes **Yellow**

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

	G		B		D		G		B		D		G		B		D		G	
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	11
A		C		E		F#		A		C		E		F#		A		C		E



Tremelo.

G	B	D	G	B	D	G	B	D	G	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A	C	E	F#	A	C	E	F#	A	C	E



Some All-Ireland winners on Tremelo.

- ◆ John, Pip and Phil Murphy.
 - ◆ Noel Battle
 - ◆ Austin Berry
 - ◆ Pauline Callinan
 - ◆ Arlene O'Sullivan
 - ◆ Denis Nolan
 - ◆ Paul Moran
 - ◆ Tom Clancy
 - ◆ Kieran McHugh
 - ◆ Mary Brogan
 - ◆ Mick Conroy
 - ◆ John Horkan
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Important players on Tremelo.

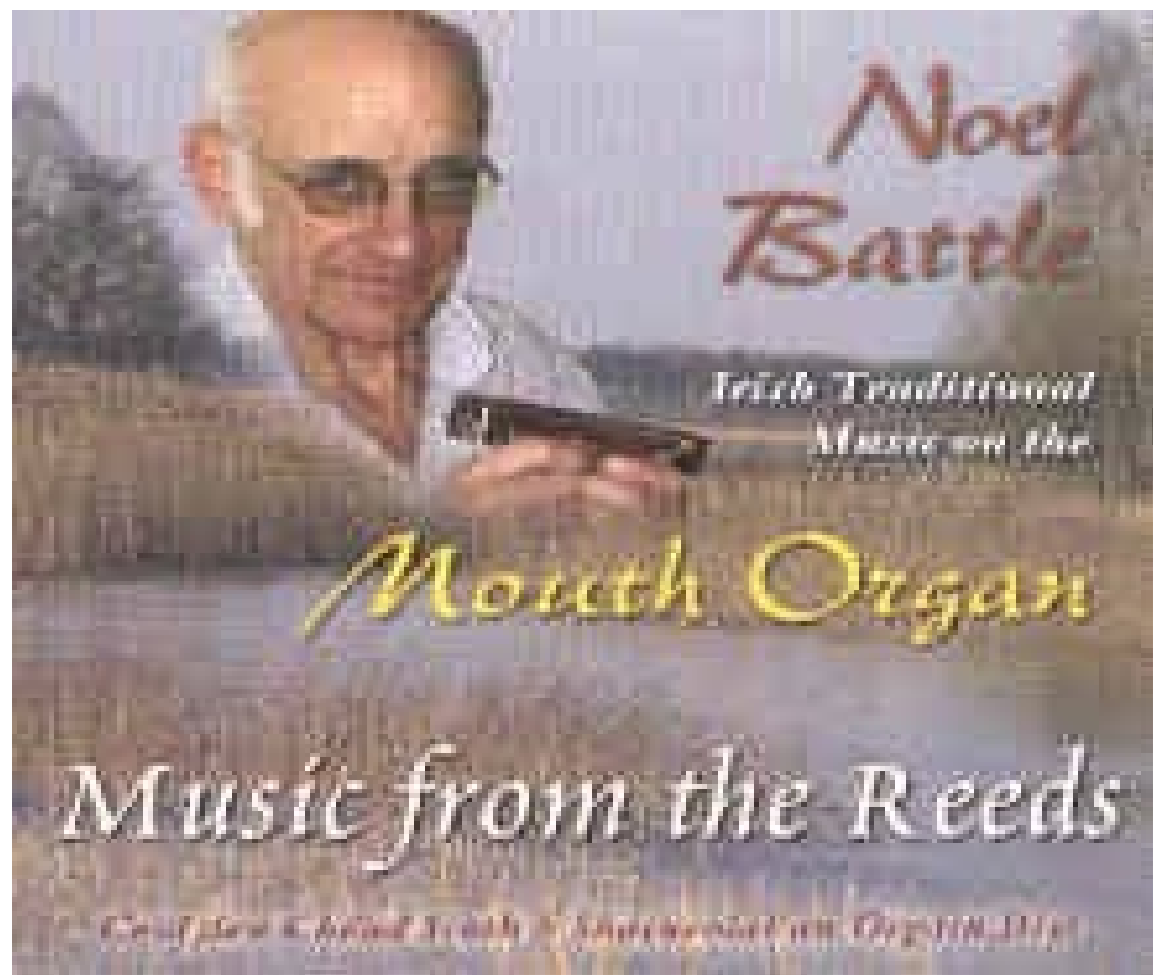


Noel Battle.

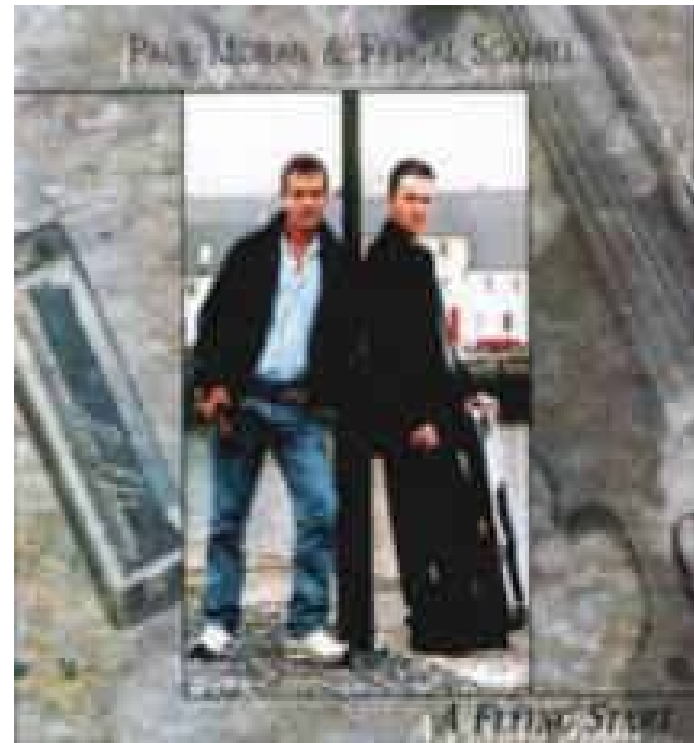
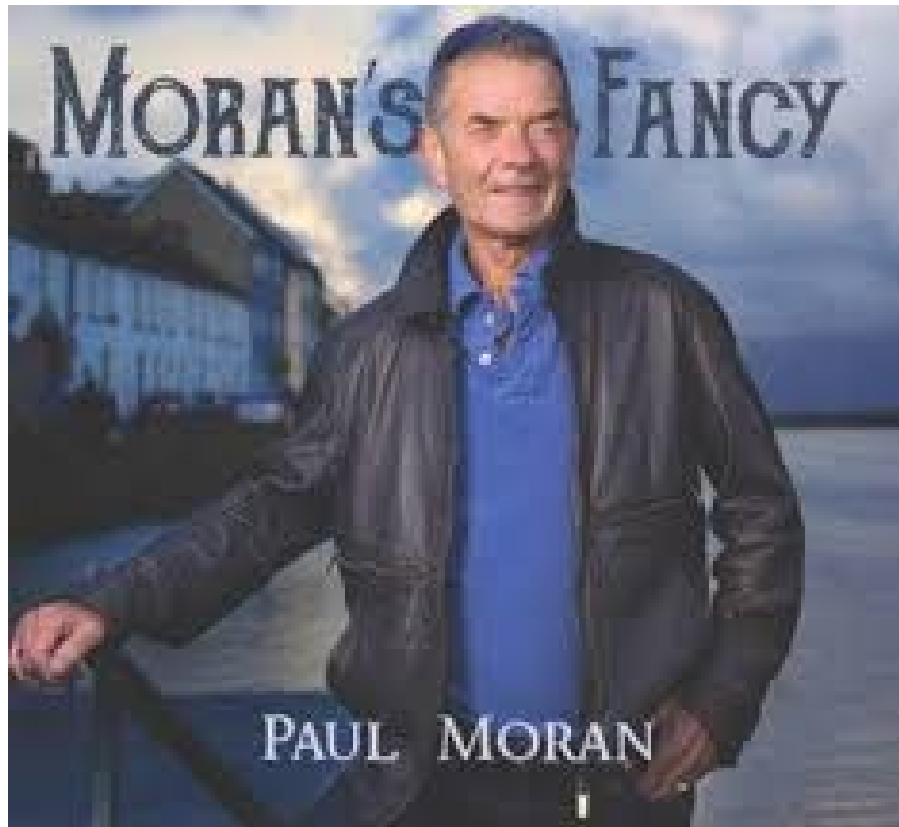




Noel Gracie and Reilyn Bröderick



Paul Moran.



John, Pip and Phil Murphy.



John and Pip.



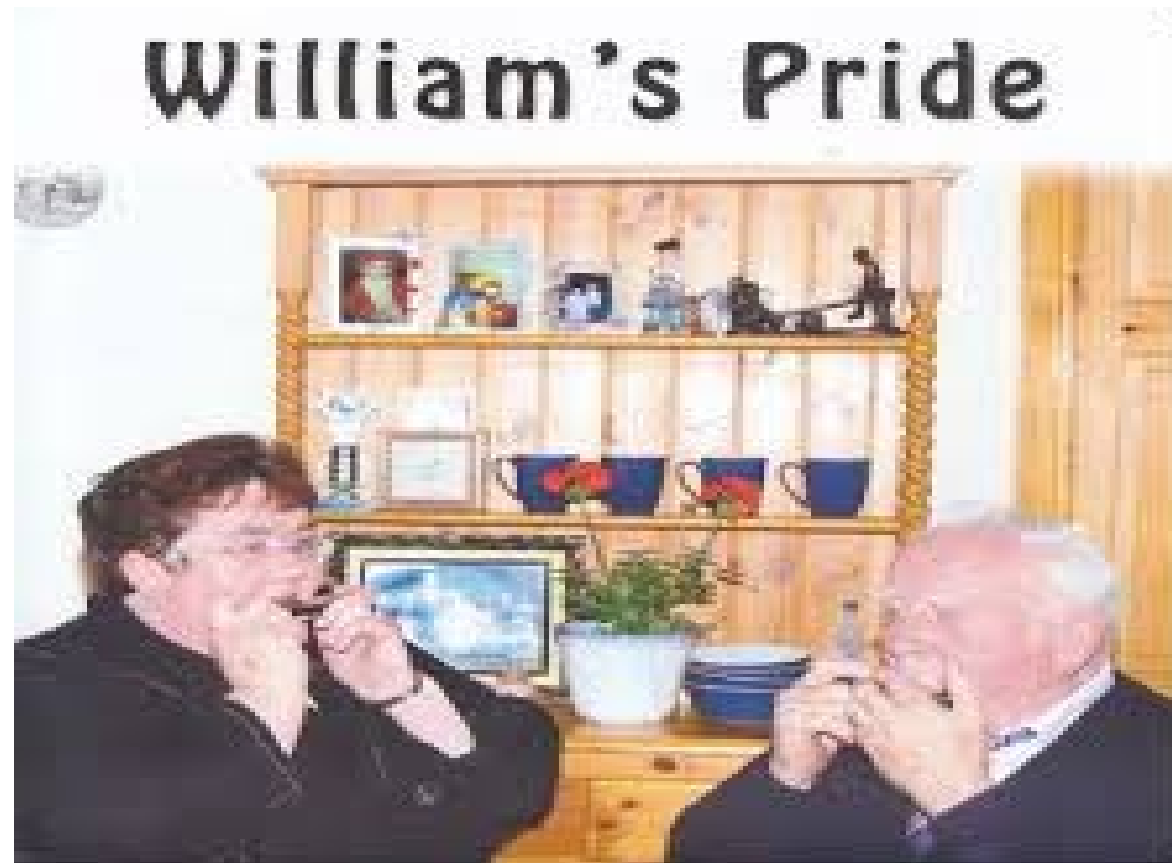
Phil, John and Pip Murphy



The Trip to Cullenstown



John and Pauline Gavin.



Mary Brogan.



Arlene O'Sullivan.



Austin Berry.



Up and Coming players.

- ◆ Kevin McCarthy-Tremelo and Diatonic (All-Ireland winner).
 - ◆ William Holmes-Tremelo (All-Ireland winner).
 - ◆ Richard Conroy-Tremelo and Diatonic
 - ◆ Alan O'Dwyer-Tremelo (All-Ireland winner).
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Ornamentation on the Harmonica.

◆ Triplet
GBG
DED
ACA

◆ Cut
G/D
B/G

◆ Triplet
EFG
*GF#G*_[Chrom]

◆ *GAGG* Roll

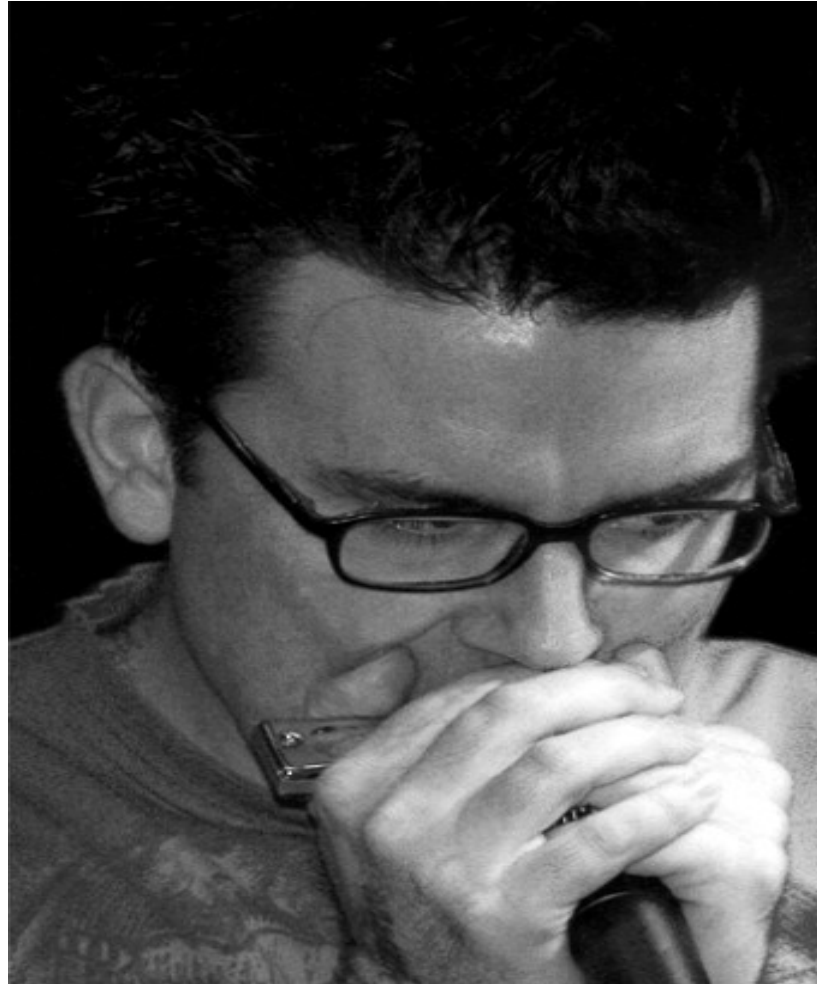
◆ Bend up to a
note(Diatonic).

◆ 5 note Roll
on Reversed
chromatic
using slide.
ACBAG

Basic Skills.

- ◆ The modern day player, in my opinion, should have some basic knowledge of the instrument.
 - ◆ Basic tuning and maintenance are skills each player should strive to attain.
 - ◆ This will keep costs at a minimum as the instruments are expensive and need constant basic care.
 - ◆ Old harmonicas can be revived or used for spares when it comes to reed replacement.
 - ◆ Most of all the harmonica player should keep an open mind when it comes to experimenting with different harmonica tunings.
 - ◆ Listen to recordings of other instruments besides harmonica.
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Teacher Michael Mc Inerny.



Wilie Clancy Summer school.

- ◆ Rick Epping and Mick Kinsella teach Trad Harmonica.
 - ◆ Week begins first weekend in July every year.
 - ◆ Instruction in basic Harmonica maintenance.
 - ◆ Diatonic, Tremelo and Chromatic.
 - ◆ Six days of lessons from 10-1.
 - ◆ Harmonica recital on last Friday with guest players.
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Tombo 21 Tremelo

Blow notes **Blow**

Draw notes **Yellow**

a	G	c	B	e	D	f#	G	a	B	c	D	e	G	f#	B	a	D	c	G	e
a	G	c	B	e	D	f#	G	a	B	c	D	e	G	f#	B	a	D	c	G	e

a	G	c	B	e	D	f#	G	a	B	c	D	e	G	f#	B	a	D	c	G	e
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
a	G	c	B	e	D	f#	G	a	B	c	D	e	G	f#	B	a	D	c	G	e

