




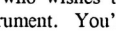

## Teach In: Fiddle Tunes For Harmonica by Glenn Weiser

*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.*

If you're a harmonica player, odds are that you have mostly played folk songs or the blues. There is, however, a third category of folk music that can be played on this humble little instrument—the fiddle tunes of the Celtic and North American traditions. Although the playing of fiddle tunes on the harmonica has been around for decades, only now, with the release of records by musicians such as Mark Graham, Andy Irvine, and others does this folk art seem to be emerging from obscurity.

Here's a reel for you to try, "Rakes of Mal-low," arranged for the diatonic (10-hole Marine Band type) harmonica, along with playing instructions. This is an Irish tune originally, and is fairly easy as fiddle tunes go. Because most harmonica players don't read music, the way we'll play this will be to read the hole numbers of the harmonica which appear below each note and to follow the rhythms of the standard notation. Circled numbers represent in or draw notes; uncircled numbers represent out or blow notes.

Reading the rhythms requires some explanation, so we will start with the idea of 4/4 or common time, which is the time signature used for reels. The spaces enclosed by the vertical lines (which are called bar lines) are called measures and there will be four beats to a measure. The exceptions to this are the pickup measures, which are incomplete measures of one beat preceding the first measure of each of the tune's two parts, and the final measures of each part, which will have three beats only (each part will be played twice). Tap your foot once for every beat as you are playing.

Within the measures you will find three kinds of notes, each having a different time value, or duration. They are the half note, (which receives two beats and looks like this: ) , the quarter note, (which receives one beat and looks like this: ) , and the eighth note, which receives half a beat. In this particular tune, there are not single eighth notes (which look like this: ) , but rather groupings of two or four eighth notes (which look like this: ) . When playing eighth notes, the odd-numbered notes in a group (first or first and third) will be sounded when your toe is down, and the even-numbered notes (second or second and fourth) will be sounded when the toe is up at its highest point. Later on, after you have mastered the tune at a slow speed and are ready to accelerate the tempo, you will probably find it easier to play the tune tapping your foot on the first and third beats of each measure only. Performance tempo for this tune is about  = 224 bpm (beats per minute).

Now you should know how to read the tune, so we'll move on to playing technique. There are two ways of playing the harmonica: tongue blocking and lip blocking (sometimes called the "pucker" method, because of the way the lips are shaped when playing). Either method may be used here, although I should say that personally I use lip blocking for fiddle tunes. On the other hand, Mark Graham, who is an excellent harmonica player, uses tongue blocking. Tongue blocking offers the possibility of accompanying oneself with a chord line, but lip blocking is easier to learn and in some cases seems to be a better way to handle some of the technical difficulties that can crop up in these tunes.

When using either of these methods, notes of the same direction that are found on adjacent reeds are to be played with the same breath. This is indicated by the curved lines (called legato or slur marks) appearing over the notes. In this tune, these slur lines can be seen to connect as many as seven or as few as two notes. The use of slurs is necessary for a smooth, flowing sound and also makes the tune easier to play.

In the last measure of each part you will see three of the same note (G or 4-blow). The way you repeat a note is different depending on whether you are a tongue or lip blocker. If you are using tongue blocking, just stop the breath and restart it again for each of the following two notes. If you are a lip blocker, you can either stop the breath or use a technique called tonguing to get a better articulated sound. The way you do this is to touch the tongue to the roof of the mouth just above your front teeth as if whispering the syllable "too," and then allow it to immediately drop back to the floor of the mouth. Tonguing is indicated by the commas appearing over the last two notes in the final measures of each part.

Hopefully that tells you just about everything you will need to know in order to play the tune. I've also included guitar chords in the arrangement for anyone who wishes to accompany you on a rhythm instrument. You'll have to use a G-scale harmonica if you want to play this with an accompanist, but otherwise the tune is playable on any 10-hole harmonica (or chromatic harmonica, for that matter, even though indications have only been included for the diatonic variety). If all this only whets your musical appetite, check out my book (mentioned above) which contains over 100 famous fiddle tunes, complete with standard notations, harmonica indications, guitar chords, playing instructions, and companion cassette. Have fun!

music >>>

# Rakes of Mallow

G-scale harmonica (diatonic)

traditional; arr. by  
Glenn Weiser

The musical score is written for a G-scale harmonica in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, D7, Bm, C, and Am. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 below the notes. The piece begins with a repeat sign and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.