



Teach In: Fiddle Tunes on Harmonica by Glenn Weiser

Glenn Weiser is a harmonicaist 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.

Part III – Alexander's Hornpipe

Earlier harmonica workshops have featured a jig (V. 34, #3), "Gallagher's Frolic," and a reel (V. 34, #1), "Rakes of Mallow," so this time I have a hornpipe for you. The hornpipe is a dance tune of English origin, the term referring to the carved horns of old on which the music was played. Hornpipes are usually not played as much as reels or jigs, but there are still many beautiful ones in the traditional repertory.

What distinguishes them rhythmically from either the reel or the jig is that hornpipes are played in dotted 4/4 time, which can be described roughly as uneven eighth notes with the first eighth in each pair being longer than the second. Although using dotted time to notate hornpipes is the usual practice, they are seldom played as written. The rhythm figure for hornpipes, as they appear in print, 

(dotted eighth – sixteenth) is supposed to be counted like this: "1-e-and-ah." But as played, the same notation turns out to be more like a triplet with the first two notes tied, which would appear like this: 

and be counted as "1 triplet, 2 triplet." Remember, the second member of a tie is not played, but instead joined to the time value of the first. This means that you will play the first and third notes of the triplet, but not the second.

An easy way to get the feel of this rhythm, which is also called "swing" eighth time because of its use in blues and jazz, is to count: **One, Two, Three, One, Two, Three**, tapping

your hand on your knee on each **One** and **Three**, but not on **Two**. Even this explanation is not entirely accurate, as some traditional musicians play hornpipes with the eighths being somewhere in between even eighths and the tied triplet figure just described.

Listening to Celtic musicians is the best way to get the rhythmic feel of the hornpipe, but meanwhile, using swing eighth time will do. Also, hornpipes are often embellished with triplets, but this should not be a problem if you can count in tied triplet time – just tap on the second note of the triplet instead of holding until the third.

Before introducing the tune, I should mention that in America many hornpipes were pressed into service as reels when social dancing started to supersede stepdancing in popularity. This accounts for tunes like "Sailor's Hornpipe," "Fisher's Hornpipe," and "Staten Island Hornpipe" being played in even eighth time instead of the uneven eighths that their titles would imply.

The tune for this workshop is "Alexander's Hornpipe" which can be found in O'Neill's Music of Ireland, and also in Cole's 1000 Fiddle Tunes, where it appears under the title "Byrne's Hornpipe." The version here is a composite of these two settings. The tempo is about ♩ = 152bpm. Remember that the commas indicate tonguing, and the curved lines indicate that the notes are to be played with the same breath. If you have any questions about this or any of the previous workshops, write P. O. Box 2551, Albany, NY 12220. Enjoy. *SO!



Alexander's Hornpipe

D harmonica

traditional

The musical score for Alexander's Hornpipe is presented in a single system with seven staves. The key signature is D major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The piece is divided into two sections: a harmonica part and a traditional melody. The harmonica part is indicated by the label "D harmonica" and the traditional part by "traditional".

The score includes the following elements:

- Staff 1:** The beginning of the piece, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a series of eighth notes. A circled 7 is placed below the first note of the triplet.
- Staff 2:** Continues the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes. Chord symbols G, D, E7, and A7 are placed above the staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-3 below the notes.
- Staff 3:** Continues the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes. A circled 8 is placed below the final note.
- Staff 4:** Continues the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes. A circled 8 is placed below the final note.
- Staff 5:** Continues the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes. A circled 8 is placed below the final note.
- Staff 6:** Continues the melody with eighth notes and quarter notes. A circled 8 is placed below the final note.
- Staff 7:** The final staff, showing the end of the piece with a double bar line and repeat dots. It includes the notes G4, A4, B4, and A4 with fingerings 7, 8, 7.

Throughout the score, various fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-3 below the notes. Chord symbols (G, D, E7, A7) are placed above the staff to indicate the harmonic structure. A circled 7 is placed below the first note of the triplet in the first staff, and circled 8s are placed below the final notes of several staves.