

Zen and Harmonica Yoga at Kripalu

I attended Zen and Harmonica Yoga this past week in Kripalu Massachusetts <http://www.kripalu.org/> with David Harp <http://www.davidharp.com/> . The course was well attended with a wide group of harmonica enthusiasts. David is a most unusual presenter. He had unique challenges in learning music and socializing with musicians as an adolescent and these challenges translated into a new user friendly way of teaching and learning harmonica. Similar to Apple computers, David has simplified the harp method and teaches it using blow holes and numbers which are solid (filled in) to suck in or hollowed out to blow out! The traditional music notations with notes and timings, just don't work for this instrument and David's system leads the way. The user friendly method is what made Apple successful, is the same way that David Harp has created with Harmonica.

I am a self taught harp player, and never knew the history, theory, scales or any breathing patterns. David teaches it all with lots of good tales from the road with the nephew of Sonny Terry, (my inspiration) James Cotton etc. The years of experience and adventure are evident in his course, which makes the learning fun.

He puts to bed the old notion of learning harp by blocking holes with your tongue - a style that was taught in the old germanic way of playing omm pappa songs. African americans led the way after the civil war, by taking these inexpensive instruments and creating new blues sounds. According to David the harmonica is the instrument of the blues which created the genre.

David mixes cognitive theory with music, for what I believe to be a brand of music therapy, via the harmonica. The use of breath, with the soothing sounds of music allows the mind to relax thereby overcoming anxieties such as fear and tension, created with with fight or flight syndrome.

The course was a great way for novice harmonica players to learn the sounds of blues harp and the foundation on which to learn more. For those interested in exploring this unique instrument David has created a clear path via his tapes, books, cd's and courses.

See www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWfFSac2qQo for my song Kripalu Blues done to the rif by Muddy Waters I'm a Man taught by David Harp and based on the Yoga instructor experience at Kripalu.

Happy Harping

The Adventure Guy