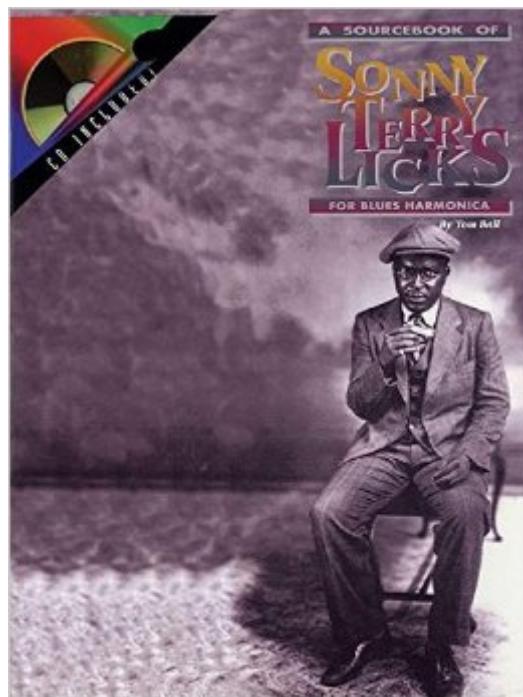


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The Sourcebook Of Sonny Terry Licks For Harmonica



Synopsis

(Harmonica). "Sonny Terry has got to be explained to the people or his art will go over their head. By understanding Sonny Terry, you will learn how to enjoy and live in the real people's music that is on a train that's bound for glory." Woody Guthrie, 1946. This book/CD pack pays homage to Terry and his infamous playing. Besides 70 famous licks from Sonny, this pack gives you some quick harmonica lessons, information on Sonny's style, a discography with key chart, and a bibliography for future research. The CD includes each lick played out by the author.

Book Information

Paperback: 48 pages

Publisher: Centerstream Publications (February 1, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1574240188

ISBN-13: 978-1574240184

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.3 x 12 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (7 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

As is obvious, this is an exploration of Sonny Terry's acoustic blues style. If that's what you're looking for, this is a great resource. The licks are authentic and well notated. There is a little (very little) instruction in the beginning, but then, there are about 2.5 zillion beginning blues harp books out there. As the other reviewer noted, the lumping of many examples on one track is nerve wracking (the reason it isn't five stars) but this is still the best thing out there for Sonny's style, and the "unplugged" blues style in general. What's not obvious is that Sonny and most country music harp players were heavily inspired by Deford Bailey, star of the Grand Ole Opry, and a lot of these licks made it to Nashville. While this might be a turn off for some people, there is very little instruction on country harmonica playing out there, and most of it is, frankly, very bad. While this book is more blues based, Charlie McCoy and others have used more than a few of these licks more than a few times. So, if you want something a little different from the straight ahead Chicago

sound other books offer, get a harp in "A" (all the examples use that key) and get playing

I heard Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee at the Second Fret in Philadelphia. Sonny set the blues harp bar so high that no one has been able to touch it. If it ain't Sonny Terry, it ain't blues harp. The author, Tom Ball, has done a superlative job of dissecting Sonny's harmonica licks, and presenting the techniques clearly. The included instruction CD is comprehensive, and is worth listening to even if you never pick up a harp. Tom does not baby those who already have some harmonica experience, but he does include a section in the book for beginners, also. Those who are already blues harpists (or wannabees) can dig right in. The book uses the same key throughout, so you need only invest in one harmonica to follow the instruction. Almost all of the blues licks are played in the key of E on a key of A harmonica (called "cross-harp" style). Tom's style is clean, which is appropriate for instruction. Sonny's style is earthy; it says that you really have to live the blues to play the blues. I remember, as a kid, checking out acoustic guitars in a store, looking for a guitar with a deep, rich sound, full base, and chords that blended into an integrated sound. Another customer, who was an instructor, was shopping for an acoustic guitar that had clear notes that sounded distinctly from each other. The analogy holds for blues harp technique. Tom Ball, whose technique is excellent, will teach you how to play Sonny's blues licks. Sonny himself, on the other hand, will teach you how to feel the blues.

This book may be good for the extreme beginner. Tom is a great player. Those are the two stars. The other three would be filled in IF he actually taught anything. He does not explain anything non-obvious for someone willing to spend more than an hour learning how Sonny Terry plays. Sonny Terry isn't known for his intro licks. He's known for being the only person to make the harmonica sound amazing as a rhythm instrument (sorry Madcat). Tom simply doesn't put enough thought into this book to credit Sonny for all his hard work. You would have to spend a lifetime trying to play exactly like Sonny Terry, but just a short while trying to play the licks you would like to incorporate into your style if someone actually had written a good instructional book. I suggest just buying the songs you like and playing them in slo-mo if you actually want to figure anything out.

The video has no menu. Can't go back and forth when trying to learn. Have to stop it and restart the whole thing. It was really not what I was looking for.

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