



Microphone Choices: WIRING FOR A HAPPY ENDING – FARTHER DOWN THE LINE! II

**“At The Harmonica Microphone Bench” with Fritz
Hasenpusch, Mel Bay’s HarmonicaSessions® eZine**

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"Making connections" in the music business isn't just about schmoozing with the local bar manager, tavern keeper, or prospective producer/engineer with the hopes of getting yourself and your harp playing heard by those potentially adoring masses. For devotees of our Sonic Savior, the TIN SANDWICH, a much more fundamental connection **MUST** be made before "THE GOODS" can be delivered: **CONTINUITY!** Go ahead, look it up in the dictionary. Allow me, it'll save us some time. **CONTINUITY:** Uninterrupted connection, succession, or union. **YEAH.** Almost enough to bring music to your ears—and without **CONTINUITY**, all that juicy tone you've been working on ain't getting' to the amp, Jack!

For our purposes, **CONTINUITY** means the unimpeded, uninterrupted flow of output signal from **LORD MICROPHONE** to its friendly enforcer/partner in sonic hijinx, the **AMPLIFIER**. Here in the **MIC DUNGEON**, we've recently looked at the importance of the many facets of **LORD MICROPHONE'S** internal wiring. We've found that thoughtful choices and informed decisions can make for a more durable, more serviceable, **DOWNRIGHT BETTER SOUNDING** microphone. Well, why stop there? Paying attention to the details beyond the confines of **LORD MICROPHONE'S** perimeter skin will pay big sonic dividends as well.

Example: The **HOHNER BLUES BLASTER**, the last surviving incarnation of the legendary **ASTATIC JT-30** in production, utilizes a **SWITCHCRAFT XLR L3M** output connector mounted in the stand lug casting of the **JT's** body. It's not used because the mic requires a balanced (**PLUS/MINUS/SHIELD**) wiring scheme. No, the mic's crystal element is **HI-Z** and only requires **POSITIVE** and **SHIELD (+&-)** conductors to carry the current. It's there because it **FITS** the 5/8" hole!

Now, typically you'll find **XLR** connectors in sound reinforcement and "**PRO AUDIO**" gear wired as follows: **PIN 1** is the **SHIELD** or **GROUND**; **PIN 2** is the **PLUS** or **POSITIVE** signal; **PIN 3** is the **MINUS** or **NEGATIVE** signal. A funny thing happens when **TIN SANDWICH JOCKEYS** attempt to use a standard-wired **XLR** cable or adaptor with their **BLUES BLASTER** (or recent vintage **CAD** or **ASTATIC JT** models): **NOTHING! NO CONTINUITY!**

Why? I'm glad you've asked, because you really should know this! The recent **JT's** **XLR's** are factory-wired as follows: **PIN 1** is the **SHIELD** or **GROUND** (**OK**); **PIN 2** is **-EMPTY!** (**WHA?**); **PIN 3** is the **PLUS** or **POSITIVE** signal! Thus, my friends, **NO CONTINUITY! NOT A SOUND** from **LORD MICROPHONE!**

How many times have you heard the tale of some TIN SANDWICH jockey walking into a MEGAMUSICSTORE looking for a cable to connect his XLR-equipped JT (or CAD or HOHNER BB) to an amp—and being sold an XLR-to-1/4" PHONEPLUG cable (likely by a guitar player employee) wired for a balanced LOW-Z mic! Maybe it's happened to you!

THE REMEDY: You simply need to re-assign the wire connected to the mic's PIN 3 to PIN 2—OR reassign the wire in the cable's XLR PIN 2 to its PIN 3. You can reverse BOTH wires if you like, but the disconnected wire from PIN 3 becomes immaterial.

PRESTO! A HAPPY ENDING!

ODDBALL CONNECTORS AND SPAGETTI! NEXT TIME WE VISIT.
THE MIC BENCH

For pictures and descriptions of most of the microphones listed visit
http://www.harmonicamasterclass.com/vintage_collection.htm