



Welcome & Introduction

When is it Okay to Blame the Instrument?

“Monster Harmonica Workbench” with Kinya Pollard,
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June 2003

Does this sound familiar: you’ve just purchased your new harmonica, possibly the urge to “try it out” was too great, not waiting to get to your next gig, or return to your home ... you open the box and admire the instrument that will ensure your name on the ballot of the next W.C. Handy Awards (Your acceptance speech is already committed to memory). You bring the harmonica to your lips, close your eyes, take a breath and HONK! You have now produced a sound that is attracting wild game within a one mile radius to you.

What’s going on here! You consider yourself a proficient Harmonica player, you even purchased the same make and model that matched your last “favorite” harmonica, yet this new instrument proved to be huge disappointment.

Now what do you do? Do you consider the money spent lost, put up with your new audience, or can you successfully modify this instrument and reclaim your old audience. My recommendations would be to stay with the modifications and your old audience—their care and feeding is not so demanding.

Hello my name is Kinya, but my friends call me Special K. Since I was four, I discovered I had a knack for tinkering. I always thought that if someone built it, that I should be able to take it apart and possibly make it work better (to my Parent’s chagrin).

It was Heaven on Earth that I was able to combine my passion for Harmonica playing with my love of tinkering. In fact, they are both sides of the same coin. While pursuing my curiosities of how the Harmonica operated, I became a better Harmonica player. Understanding the mechanics of the instrument provided me with a visualization that enabled me to apply optimum techniques to my playing, for example, position of my grip, jaw, lips, and tongue.

In addition, I learned that I did not have to conform to the limitations of a “out of the box” Harmonica. You can learn to make your instrument play better than stock. You now become the rider, not the horse!

Now that I have properly introduced myself, my next article will dive right into the techniques of “retrofitting” your Harmonica. Get out your goggles, torches and power tools, we’re gonna to start choppin!

Kinya, Special K
Harmonica Junkie