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PMLD12BK

Melodion Melodica

USER MANUAL



The Melodica, also known as the Wind Piano can be described as a free reed system with a mouthpiece, air chamber, and keyboard. The Melodica sounds very much like a keyboard harmonica (although it is a tad more difficult to bend notes on it as you are further from the reeds) and it produces sound only exhaling into not inhaling. When playing more than one note at a time (polyphonic) the Melodica can sound very reminiscent of an accordion. Aside from these two analogies the instrument has an identity of its own.

How to hold the instrument:

Hold the melodica with the left hand as these are right handed instruments. Place hand between the instrument and the handle. Press lips around the mouthpiece, ensuring that all sides are closed. Stay relaxed and experiment with what feels & sounds right. Many melodicas come with a flex tube allowing you move, play, and see the instrument at different angles. Place the melodica & flex tube on the piano and play with one hand on each instrument.



How to play:

The two main concepts to be addressed when approaching the melodica are hand technique & breath control. Like singing it may be easier to play if you are standing. For smooth passages (legato) use the "breath mode", namely breathe air into the



instrument. For heavier passages use the palate attack, using air as in whistling either more or less, as required. The tongue can be used for short and precise note values (staccato). In this way suitable articulation for all kinds of playing will develop. Quickly vary your breath to create tremolo (change in volume). This is the melodica's version of vibrato (change in pitch).

Caution: A fast intense burst of air can knock your reed out of alignment. Think of it as blowing into a balloon. The harder/faster you blow the louder your keyboard will sound.

The more notes you play at the same time the softer the instrument may sound as you are displacing air thru more reeds. Experiment.

Bending notes

While holding down a key and blowing steadily, slowly lift your finger allowing the key to rise (so it is at the point where the air flow is incomplete or choking the reed). At this time you will hear the pitch drop. A technique can be developed where by playing pressing the keys half way down while blowing, this Bending of notes will occur.

Next, address the instrument's keyboard. There are few books out on how to play the melodica. Some people will naturally just begin to listen, play & find melodies, and via trial and error begin to put together a style. If you are just starting out and have never played a keyboard before we recommend acquiring a basic piano book of scales and the



appropriate fingering. This is necessary regardless if you plan to read music or not. It is a great system for exposing yourself to different keys and developing a hand system for passing the thumb under the fingers allowing you to play longer phrases (sentences).

Care of the melodica:

When not in use keep the instrument in its box to protect it from dust, dirt and children. Make sure the box is vented to minimize condensation. Cold temperature also affects the smooth working of the reeds, so let the instrument warm up to room temperature before playing. Playing a melodica that is cooler than room temperature will put condensation on the reeds.

Caution: Do not leave a melodica in hot car during summer. Temps above 90 degrees may reduce your wind piano to a warp piano (distant unplayable relative).

Periodically open the moisture vent located on end of melodica opposite the mouthpiece, by pressing the button especially immediately after playing, and blow through the instrument without pressing any of the keys or hold melodica vertically and shake up and down. This will remove most condensation which may have collected. Shake the flex tube to expel moisture. From time to time these instruments like their cousins the harmonica/accordion/organ require some reeds to be tuned.



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