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SESSION SHUFFLE

- STEVE BAKER

Note B G# A G# E E
Hole No. 4 3 4 3 2 2
Blow / Draw ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓


Note B G# A G# E E
Hole No. 4 3 4 3 2 2
Blow / Draw ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓

Note B A B G E C# G# E
Hole No. 4 4 4 3 2 2 3 2
Blow / Draw ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓

ENDING

Note A B G E C# E D B Bb A B Bb A G E E
Hole No. 4 4 3 2 2 6 5 4 4 4 4 4 4 3 2 2
Blow / Draw ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓

Form: theme
 harp solo
 harp solo
 piano solo
 harp solo
 harp solo
 theme, end

	full version:	track 01
	playback version:	track 12
Description:		Harp:
12 bar medium-tempo shuffle in E		A harp, 2 nd position

The so-called shuffle rhythm is probably *the* classic blues beat. Its familiar loping groove is also found in other styles, but it's central to modern blues. If you're interested in this kind of music then there is simply no way around learning to shuffle. What you need to remember when playing shuffles is that they are based on eighth beat triplets – this means each bar consists of four quarter beats 1 2 3 4 etc., but each of these is subdivided into three equal parts, so that you count 1 2 3 2 2 3 3 2 3 4 2 3 and so on. This is what gives shuffles their characteristic rolling feel. Technically this rhythm is known as $\frac{12}{8}$, but it's usually written as $\frac{3}{4}$, with a note at the top indicating that it's played as a shuffle (*see left*). Often the first two triplets are run together, creating the Daa da Daa da effect which you hear on this title (Daa lasts twice as long as da).



The reason why you need to know this is because it plays a vital role in phrasing over shuffle rhythms – any note which doesn't come right on one of the quarter beats will fall on one of the triplets in between, usually the one before the next quarter beat (da).

Like all 12-bars, this one can be broken down into three 4-bar segments. The theme basically consists of one phrase, which is played once over the first 4 bars, is repeated over the second 4 bars, and repeated again with a slight variation over the final 4-bar sequence, ending with the so-called “turnaround”, which leads into the following verse.

Here the theme starts right on the first beat of the first bar after the drum lead-in. I hit the 4-draw slightly bent and slide straight up to the natural note, holding it for six quarter beats (count 1 2 3 4 1 2) before moving on to the second half of the phrase, which begins on 3-draw on the triplet before the next quarter beat, just as described above. The final note of the phrase (2-draw) also falls in the same way, coming just before the 1-beat of the third bar. Though the rest of the phrase is played using the lipping embouchure, I tongue block this final note. The percussive effect comes from the tongue slap (holes 1 and 2 both sound for a fraction of a second, before the tongue blocks off hole 1).

Second time around the bend on the initial note is more pronounced, but the phrase is otherwise the same. The third 4-bar segment over the V and IV chords B7 and A starts like the other two, but then goes into a slight variation to round the whole thing off. Here the second note of the phrase (A, 4-blow) comes right on the first beat of the bar instead of on the triplet before the 1 beat, as was the case with the first two riffs. Notice that this time the 3-draw is bent down a semitone, producing a G instead of an A \flat note (*see practicing tip*).

The first solo starts with a lead-in over the end of the turnaround and is played on the first three holes (1-draw, 2-blow, 2-draw, 3-draw) except for the twiddly bit at the end of the verse. Most of the first 8 bars is tongue blocked except for the bends on 2-draw. The solo builds up to the next verse, and moves into a higher register, mixing tongue blocking and lipping. I play an octave interval on the IV chord in bar 5, blocking holes 4 and 5 while blowing through 3 and 6, fol-

lowed by a fast jazzy run. Over the last four bars I resolve the tension by returning closer to the theme before leading into the piano solo.

After the piano solo the harp comes back in with a long trill on 4- and 5-draw, then I bend 3-draw in half tone steps down from A \flat through G to G \flat . This creates a neat effect, as G \flat forms an E7/9 chord when played over E7. The rest of this verse is fairly low-key and jazzy before I return to the phrase used in the first solo to build on familiar ground in the last one. The final verse uses the same theme as at the beginning (slight ornamentations) and finishes with a typical blues ending played in straight eighths (1 and 2 and 3 and 4) across the triplet shuffle rhythm.

Practicing tip: Try hitting 3-draw already bent down a semitone. If you have difficulty doing this, play the natural note, then bend it down. Your throat muscles have to remember the position they take on when bending, so that you can learn to adopt the right form when playing bent notes directly. Now try to integrate this into the first part of the phrase from bar 10 in the theme.

SESSION SHUFFLE - EXERCISE 1

A B G E C# E A B G E C# E
 4 4 3 2 2 2 4 4 3 2 2 2
 ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓

Take your time, choose a slow tempo and concentrate on getting the intonation and timing right before you practice with the playback. Another technique used here is playing blow octaves – you can use the tip of your tongue to block two channel openings, letting the air pass around it, through the corners of your mouth and into the two channels either side of the ones you're blocking.

SESSION SHUFFLE - EXERCISE 2

E 6 E 6 E 6 E 6
 E 3 E 3 E 3 E 3
 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑



You got to listen to learn,
you got to learn to listen

DR. JOHN