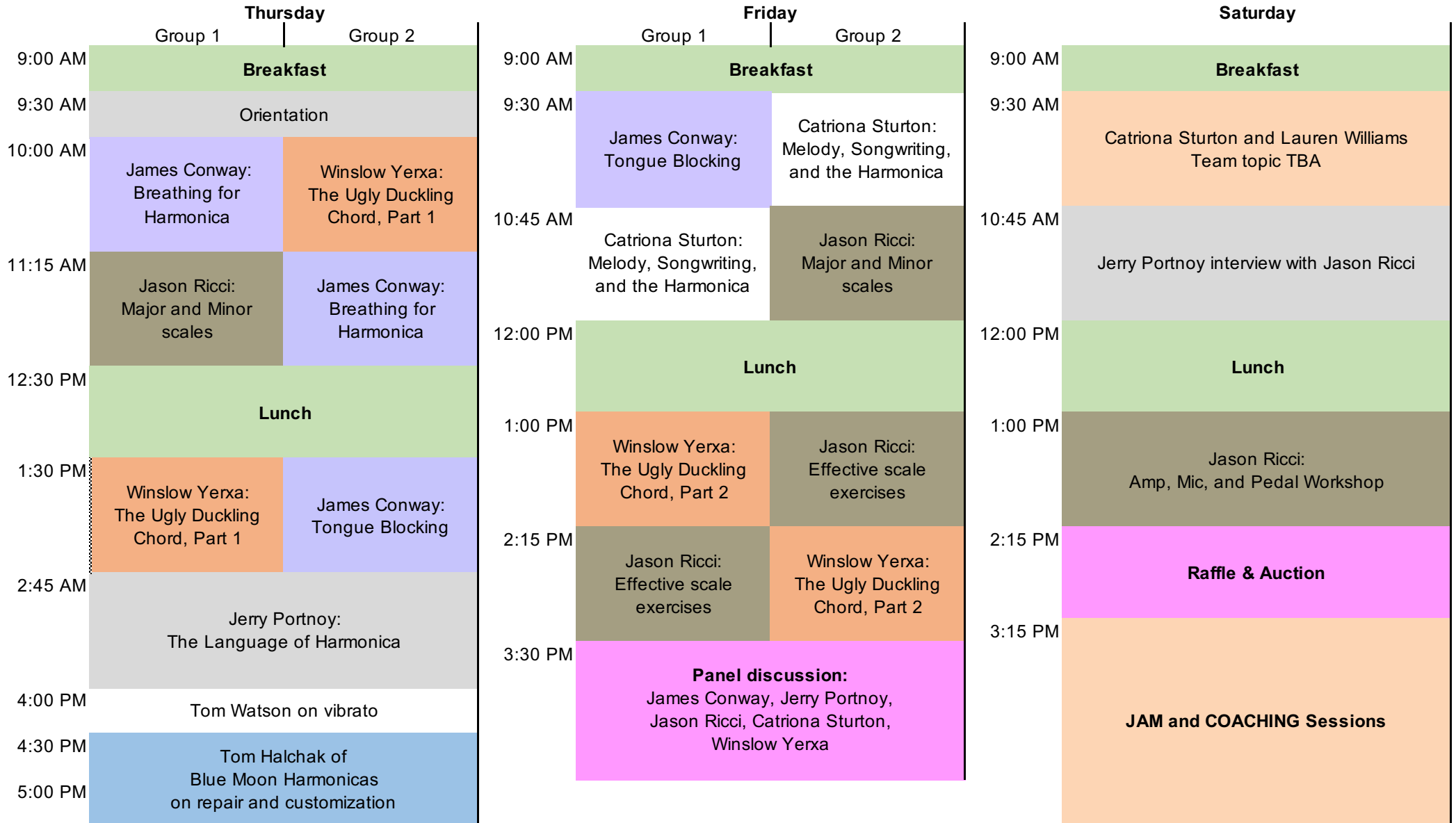


Harmonica Collective 2020 Spring Schedule

Thursday, March 19 • Friday, March 20 • Saturday, March 21

NOTE: Scheduling and topics subject to change. Current as of February 13, 2020



See the following pages for details on each presenter and topic.

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Here's what the five expert guides and three additional presenters will be teaching. See previous page for schedule.

James Conway

Jim grew up deeply imbued in both Irish traditional music and the blues, playing harmonica, tin whistle, bodhran (hand drum) and guitar. From his home base in Chicago, James performs (including a weekly train ride jam), records, and teaches. His phenomenal command of fast Irish tunes combines with a unique understanding of blues harmonica to produce a fascinating approach to music, which he communicates with clarity. At the **Harmonica Collective 2020 Spring Gathering**, hearing him will inspire and excite you, while learning from him will open up a whole new world of ways to approach the harmonica. Here's what he'll be teaching.

Breathing and Air Management for Harmonica

James shares his breathing secrets and techniques that include

- Long tones
- Vibrato
- Diaphragmatic control
- Seamless blow/draw transitions
- Air-bound/air-loss solutions
- Expanding and utilizing the vocal tract
- Effortless speed-playing: Piston Method
- Dynamics: volume swelling/fading
- Circular breathing for novelty *and* musicality

Techniques, Tricks, and Benefits of the Tongue-Blocking Embouchure

James shows us the many ways that tongue blocking can enhance your playing, some of which maybe new even to experienced tongue blockers.

- Rhythmic chording
- Left and right tongue block – playing out of either side of your mouth
- Octave playing
- Splitting
- Switching between left and right sides of the tongue

Jerry Portnoy

For over half a century, Chicago native Jerry Portnoy has played with the cream of blues and blues-rock musicians, including Muddy Waters and Eric Clapton. An excellent teacher in addition to being one of the top blues harmonica stars, Jerry will share the wisdom he's crystallized on all three days of the 2020 Spring Collective:

On **Thursday**, Jerry will give a solo talk with his unique musical insights:

The Language of Harmonica: an overarching view of playing music.

1. Playing as speech
2. Diction and forming your words
3. Developing your vocabulary
4. Finding something to say
5. Speaking with expression
6. Knowing when to speak

On **Friday**, Jerry will participate in a panel discussion with the assembled Expert Guides, including Jason Ricci, James Conway, Catriona Sturton, and Winslow Yerxa. On **Saturday**, Jerry will be interviewed one on one by Jason Ricci.

Jason Ricci

Jason Ricci moves from strength to strength in his varied and wide ranging performing career. He is an award winning musician (Grammy Award in 2015, for playing on the final Johnny Winter album *Step Back*, Blues Music Award in 2010 for Best Harmonica Player, and SPAH's Bernie Bray Harmonica Player of the Year Award in 2017). He has turned the harmonica world upside down, bringing new depths of expression to the instrument through his virtuosic chops, innovative approach, and deeply studied use of effects and amplification. His songwriting subjects go beyond traditional blues subjects, with fearlessly honest, soul-searing – yet humorous – songs that often chronicle his out-in-the-open battles with bipolar disorder and addiction. As a teacher, Jason's generosity and enthusiasm in sharing his knowledge and love of music is contagious, and he conveys it with humor, clarity, and passion.

Jason has a way of taking the most mundane subject and making it sparkle with creative ideas that will enliven your playing and light up the dark spots in your understanding. Jason will teach three topics on three days:

Major and Minor Scales

- A. What is the purpose of learning, practicing, and using scales?
- B. What is the difference between Major and Minor?
- C. How to use and identify scales for specific types of music and/or chord changes.
- D. Identifying Key scale tones for personality, ethnicity, and function.
- E. Breaking a "rut" or stagnation period in your playing.

Scale Exercises

- I. Using scale exercises for learning the layout of your instrument,
- II. Gaining and developing intonation, speed, and note temperament.
- III. Creating mental maps or visualizing geometric relationships between scale tones.
- IV. Learning to play your own music, not just licks.
- V. Learning to create music and melody on the fly (improvising).
- VI. Finding new patterns on your instrument that you're not use to playing and developing fluidity.

Amp, Mic, and Pedal Workshop

- I. How to dial in your amplifier and choosing your amplifier.
 - A. Finding your tone.
 - B. How to get the most volume out of your amplifier before feedback.
 - C. Do I need an amplifier at all?
- II. Choosing a microphone
 - A. Bullets microphones and other microphones that effect tone. Why or why not. Advantages and disadvantages.
 - B. Clean microphones or modern dynamic Microphones. Why or why not, advantages and disadvantages.
- III. Pedals and other outboard devices
 - A. Anti-feedback solutions via an outboard device.
 - B. Tone shaping through pre-amp/distortion and compression pedals.
 - C. Other effects (pitch shifters, wahs, delays, reverb, etc.)
 - D. Why use pedals or why not.
 - E. Pedal order and designing your board.

Catriona Sturton

Catriona Sturton, a former student of Jason Ricci, is a road-toughened independent performer who has toured the US, Japan, Canada, Italy, and Germany from her home base in Ottawa, Canada. As a player, she seamlessly integrates guitar, harmonica, and violin, and infuses her original music partly with blues and folk and partly with her background as an indie rock bass player in the band Plumtree, whose song *Scott Pilgrim* inspired a series of graphic novels and the major motion picture *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*.

Catriona is also a patient and insightful teacher who teaches hundreds of beginning harmonica players every year and also some high-level pros in her native Canada. Her presentations offers valuable insights:

Melody, Songwriting, and the Harmonica - from the perspective of a songwriter

Catriona will share secrets of melody from the perspective of a songwriter, giving you tools to improve your melodic interpretation, improvisation and creation on harmonica. She'll shine a spotlight on how to use melodic considerations to create memorable song accompaniments and be part of what an audience will be humming to themselves long after the show.

- I. Why is melody important?
 - A. Emotional Response
 - B. Hooks and Stickyness
 - C. Why the importance of melody can be overlooked.
- II. Visual Representations of Melodies
 - A. Motion in song forms
 - B. Phrase Shapes
 - C. Journey of a bent note
- III. Storytelling and story arcs in melody
 - A. Repetition
 - B. Novelty
 - C. Making Patterns
- IV. Connecting to your emotions
 - A. Feeling and expressing your feelings
 - B. Connecting melodically with others
 - C. How melody connects with other facets of music

Team teaching topic with Lauren Williams

(topic to be announced)

Winslow Yerxa

Winslow is the author of the books *Harmonica For Dummies, Second Edition* and *Blues Harmonica For Dummies* and past president of SPAH, the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of the Harmonica. In the 1990s he published the magazine *HIP-the Harmonica Information Publication* and transcribed John Popper's solos for the *Four* songbook, in addition to transcribing Howard Levy's solos for his *Out of the Box* instructional publication. In 2013, he and Jason Ricci co-founded the annual Harmonica Collective teaching event. This time Winslow will focus on these subjects:

The Ugly Duckling chord, Parts 1 and 2

The major I, IV, and V chord are the three most important chords in music, yet the harmonica gives you only two full major chords and one minor. This means there's always one important chord left out in first and second positions – the ugly duckling chord. Every player learns common ways to gloss over that missing chord, but I show you how to turn that duckling into a swan. I'll show you how to dig deeper and bust out of the common ruts players often fall into, and how to play over those chords when they come up in different chord progressions:

First position ugly duckling chords

- I. The IV chord in first position
 - A. Outlining the chord
 - B. Building melodic lines from the chord outline
 - C. Inflecting the I chord instead of playing the IV chord
- II. The V chord in first position
 - A. Adapting your second position knowledge to the first-position V chord
 - B. Anchoring your V chord to the following chord
- III. Connecting the three chords to each other
 - A. Landing your anchor
 - B. Connecting the I chord and the IV chord
 - C. Connecting the I chord and the V chord
 - D. Connecting the IV chord and the V chord

Second position ugly duckling chords

- I. The IV chord in second position
 - A. Inflecting the I chord vs. playing the IV chord
 - B. Wiley Coyote and the edge of the cliff

- C. Embroidering chord tones
- II. The V chord in second position
 - A. The middle octave challenge
 - i. Minor versus major
 - ii. The sneaky four-note lick
 - iii. Overblows, half-valving, and altered tunings
 - B. The low octave challenge
 - i. Bending Draw 2
 - ii. Bending Draw 3
 - iii. Connecting the bends
 - C. The top octave challenge
 - i. The Blow 9 bend
 - ii. Connecting the chord notes
- III. Connecting the three chords to each other
 - A. Landing your anchor
 - B. Connecting the I chord and the IV chord
 - C. Connecting the I chord and the V chord
 - D. Connecting the IV chord and the V chord

Additional Staff and Presenters

Tom Watson

Tom is a Florida-based harmonica player and medical doctor, and a harmonica event producer, having produced a Magic Dick-Jason Ricci teaching event before coming onboard as producer at the Harmonica Collective in 2018. Tom will give a presentation on vibrato at the **Harmonica Collective 2020 Spring Gathering**, while also staffing the Well of Knowing individual coaching team with Lauren Williams and various Expert Guides.

Lauren Williams

Lauren wowed SPAH attendees last year with her big Chicago amplified tone, performing with her regular duo partner, husband Trent Souder, as LC Williams and the Driver. She's used the harmonica working with special needs children in Maine before relocating to Florida. At the **Harmonica Collective 2020 Spring Gathering**, Lauren will be using her experience teaching beginners as part of the Well of Knowing individual coaching team. She will also co-present with Catriona Sturton in a team teaching topic on Friday.

Tom Halchak

Tom Halchak is the man behind Blue Moon Harmonicas. He launched his business in 2009 making custom combs and has since evolved into one of the premier builders of custom harmonicas in the world. Tom has been a sponsor since the beginning of the Harmonica Collective in 2013. At the **Harmonica Collective 2020 Spring Gathering**, Tom will give a presentation on harmonica customization, maintenance and repair. In addition, he will also have plenty of goodies available including custom harps, fully restored vintage pre-wars, custom combs, and other components.

[Click here to register for the Harmonica Collective 2020 Spring Gathering](#)