

How to Play a Wind Instrument without Creating a Fomite

for melodica and air pump

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(2020)

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Items Needed:

Melodica

Air Pump (manual or electric)

Cloth Mask

Protective Gloves

Rubber bands

Duct Tape (optional for Version 2)

Preparing the Performer:

The performer should wear gloves and mask—N95 masks should be donated to emergency responders and not wasted.

Preparing the Melodica:

Use three rubber bands to hold down the three highest keys (see *figure 1*).

Performance Version 1—using an electric air pump:

1. Tear off a short length of duct tape.
2. Tear this into two thin strips lengthwise.
3. Use one strip to adhere the nozzle of an electric air pump—of the kind used to inflate balls, tires, air mattresses, etc.—to the air intake of the melodica (see *figure 2*).
4. Turn on the air pump. Adjustment may be necessary to ensure a proper seal between the pump and the melodica—use the second strip of tape as needed.
5. With gloved hands, depress additional keys in a well-spaced arpeggio—taking care not to repeat any pitch classes—until the melodica can no longer be heard above the roar of the air pump.

For example, if the top three notes are



6. Once the air pump completely masks the melodica, turn off the pump and exit.

Figure 1



Figure 2



then the arpeggio could consist of



Performance Version 2—using a hand pump:

1. Using steps 1-4 of Version 1, one could try attaching the hand pump's nozzle to the melodica's air intake, but given the lower air pressure, this may not be as effective as physically holding the nozzle to the air intake while operating the pump.
2. With the rubber bands in place and the nozzle attached to the air intake, depress the hand pump's plunger once, fast enough to sound all (or nearly all) the notes held by rubber bands.
3. Add another rubber band thereby increasing the high register cluster downward by one half-step.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until air pressure is too weak to sound any pitches in the cluster.
5. Exit.