



# Microphone Choices:

## WIRING FOR A HAPPY ENDING!

“At The Harmonica Microphone Bench” with Fritz Hasenpusch, Mel Bay’s HarmonicaSessions® eZine

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In attending to the principal mission of delivering the Harp Jockey's sonic goods to the rest of the world, it's very often the subtle yet fundamental details that prevent even the finest player/microphone combination from "GETTING IT OUT THERE." Let's assume that the MIC'S ELEMENT is generating the desired level of output and that the AMPLIFIER that it's connected to is functioning properly. The TIN SANDWICH itself is doing just fine. So what else is there to consider?

I can tell you that after gazing into the abyss of countless HARPMIC innards that there are many, many people who are not giving LORD MICROPHONE his due respect and attention. This becomes obvious when one beholds the variety of aged/deficient/just plain reckless examples of internal and external wiring to be found associated with our venerable audio icon, LORD MICROPHONE.

The Inside Story: Very often, a MIC'S internal problems can be traced to something as simple as a disconnected/frayed/broken wire that's preventing the proper flow of the ELEMENT'S signal to the MIC'S output connector -or output CABLE (Another problematic component!). These symptoms can often be visually checked and corrected.

Another cause of signal flow problems that's not nearly as obvious is the COLD SOLDER JOINT. This is a soldered connection that does not adequately pass the proper level of audio-electrical signal from one point to another in its circuit. Visualize this: The COLD SOLDER JOINT is very much like a closed—or only partially open—valve in a pipeline. It blocks the flow. Typical causes of the COLD SOLDER JOINT could stem from the lack of the proper FLUX being applied to the components being joined, the components themselves being incompatible with soldering (Typical high-pressure cast Zinc MIC bodies and chrome surfaces DON'T accept solder) or the surfaces of the candidate parts are coated with oxidation or a contaminating material that prevents their joining. Very often, when all other systems are "GO," the problem can be traced to the impatience of the person holding the soldering pencil: Both surfaces need to be heated adequately to cause the SOLDER to flow between them—and then left undisturbed until the SOLDER is completely set.

"HEY FRITZ! I've been installing copper waterpipe under my kitchen sink and have enough solder and acid flux left over to fix a bunch of my busted mics and cables. What 'cha think?"  
Signed, HANDYMAN

Dear HANDYMAN: NO!!!! Just like there are different hammers, wrenches, and screwdrivers, there are different solders for different purposes. Electrical SOLDER has specific properties that make it best suited to its task.

WIRING FOR A HAPPY ENDING -THE OUTSIDE STORY! Next time on THE MIC BENCH

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED (Email them to me at [HARPMICMAN@earthlink.net](mailto:HARPMICMAN@earthlink.net)).

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For pictures and descriptions of most of the microphones listed visit  
[http://www.harmonicamasterclass.com/vintage\\_collection.htm](http://www.harmonicamasterclass.com/vintage_collection.htm)