

C Treble inst.

JAZZ LICK OF THE WEEK!

#9

"BLUES LICKS - PART 2"

A bit later in this PDF I'll look at a few "gutsy" blues chord changes, as well as some input from a couple of guest contributors.

Bu we'll kick things off with some licks for the more beginner jazz players.

Lick #1.

Slight modification from a lick last week. Starting on the b3, up chromatically to the 4th etc.

Track # 1 (One bar rest between each chord, and each chord is repeated).

Lick #2.

Uses a bit of the principle of lick #1, but starting in the 5th and working down to the 4th. The nice little end to the lick is the 3rd up to the tonic. Gives it bit of a gospel blues sort of sound.

Track # 2 (One bar rest between each chord, and each chord is repeated).

Lick #3.

Need at least 2 bars for this one. Practice it in two sections. a) the bit in brackets. b) is lick #2.

**Be aware of these scale degrees as you play the licks as it will help you to then transpose it into other keys as well as giving you a sense of where in the chord you are.*

Track # 3 (each chord is repeated)

Lick #4. You could approach this as 5, b7, 9, 1 etc of the chord, but give your brain a workout by looking at it as the chord's related II*.

What a related II does is automatically get you a touch "outside" (as it contains the 9th of the chord and avoids the 3rd).

In a nutshell, think of the minor chord a 5th up from the chord you are playing. So over the F7 you are thinking Cm7. Over Bb7 you are thinking Fm7. (This will strain the brain a bit, but this kind of "multi level" approach gets used in lots of more advanced improv situations.

Track # 4 (each chord is repeated)

Musical notation for Track #4, showing two staves of music in C major with a key signature of one flat. The first staff starts with an F7 chord and contains two measures of music. The second staff starts with a C7 chord and contains four measures of music, ending with a 3x repeat sign.

So now try them with a standard blues progression.

This first one I've demonstrated using lick #2.
(Again, try to memorize/and hear the lines)

Track # 5

12 BAR BLUES
(IN CONCERT F)

Musical notation for Track #5, a 12-bar blues in Concert F. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with an F7 chord and contains four measures. The second staff starts with a Bb7 chord and contains four measures. The third staff starts with a C7 chord and contains four measures, ending with a 3x repeat sign.

And here's the blues progression with lick #4.

Track # 6

12 BAR BLUES
(IN CONCERT F)

The musical notation shows a 12-bar blues progression in F major. The first line contains two measures of F7. The second line contains one measure of Bb7 and one measure of F7. The third line contains one measure of C7, one measure of Bb7, and one measure of F7, followed by a 3x repeat sign.

For owners of "Jazz Improvisation - The Fundamentals", unit 7&8 contains some blues progressions in Bb as well as F without the demo lines so that you can try to "mix & match your lines a bit. The supplement pages have changes over extra chords to challenge you even further. The medium level book has plenty of opportunities to use the licks too, but most are within II V I progressions.

PTO to look at some analysis on more advanced blues progressions, and then bit of a look at pentatonic lines.

1. VARIATIONS/ RE-HARMONISATIONS ON THE 12 BAR BLUES.
2. PENTATONIC LICKS OVER BLUES CHORDS

First I'll look at a bit of harmony before moving onto a few licks. (The chord are in concert pitch).

If some of the concepts are a bit unfamiliar to you (modal interchange, related II's, Sub V's etc), I've just released "Jazz Harmony - From The Ground Up" Book #2. It covers these topics and more, and includes a few exercises to try out, and audio tracks to hear some of the examples. Better still, to mark its release I'm currently offering books 1 & 2 plus the book 1 work book as a package for \$9!!

"Blues For Alice" by Charlie Parker takes the 12 bar blues changes a bit further.

Track # 7.

BLUES FOR ALICE

Chord progression for "Blues For Alice" (12 bars):

Bar 1: Fmaj7
 Bar 2: Em7(b9)
 Bar 3: A7
 Bar 4: Dm7
 Bar 5: G7
 Bar 6: Cm7
 Bar 7: F7
 Bar 8: Bb7
 Bar 9: Bbm7
 Bar 10: Eb7
 Bar 11: Am7
 Bar 12: D7
 Bar 13: Abm7
 Bar 14: Db7
 Bar 15: Gm7
 Bar 16: C7
 Bar 17: F7
 Bar 18: D7
 Bar 19: Gm7
 Bar 20: C7

Since this isn't a dedicated harmony discussion page I'll just do a brief analysis. Contact me if you have any questions.

Bar 1 - **IMaj7** (hmm, doesn't cry out "blues" yet).

Bars 2-4 Cycle of 5th movement (II V, II V, II V) resolving to the all important.....

Bar 5 - **IV7** probably the most important bar as far as the blues pattern goes. (Remember that in a major key chord IV diatonically would be a Maj7 type chord).

Bars 6-8 Cyclic motion again, but a bit more complicated. Series of II V's again, but if you took away the related II's you're left with dom7 chords resolving by half step (tri tone subs).

Bar 9-10 Continues the motion of the bars preceding it, but the harmonic rhythm has slowed down (1 bar per chd). We've also arrived at the traditional II V I.

Bar 1-12 . Home on the I chord, and then a turn around to do it all over again.

"Some Other Blues" by Coltrane looks simple in it's slow harmonic rhythm, and it's lack of any chord other than a Dom7. It's got a very "quirky" but very cool bars 5-8. Have a listen to it. Without even knowing what he's doing you can hear the uniqueness of the changes.

SOME OTHER BLUES

Track # 8.

The musical notation consists of three staves in C major, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes in each staff are represented by diagonal slashes. The first staff covers bars 1-4 with chords F7, Bb7(sus4), F7, and B7. The second staff covers bars 5-8 with chords Bb7, Eb7, Ab7, and Db7. The third staff covers bars 9-12 with chords C7, F7, and C7. A '5' is written below the first staff and a '9' below the third staff.

Bar 1 - I7

Bar 2 - IV7 (sus4). The quality of the sus4 doesn't take away the function of the IV chord. So pretty much sticking to tradition so far.

Bar 4 - Could have sat on I7 as per tradition, but threw in a subV/IV (tri tone sub.)
This then resolves a half step to...

Bar 5 - **the IV7!!** (starting to get an idea of how important this chord situated at bar 5 is?)

Bars 6-8 nice clean cycle of 5ths, with the chord at bar 8 being a subV/V (tri tone sub) to the V chord at bar 9. It certainly gets the listeners attention.

Bar 9- 12. V7 chord going to chord I as it should.

Now for some contributions from a couple of readers of "Lick Of The Week"!!

Thanks to Joe Springton (sax player) of MA (USA).

"Hi Rob. Love your page. Do you think you could have a look at this tune called "Blue Comedy" in your blues discussion please? I'm not very good at harmony, but it looks like it fits within the blues boundaries".

Thanks Joe. I've never heard this tune before I must confess, but it's great! See how I go....

"Blue Comedy" by Michael Gibbs.

Ok, this is the kind of "out there" one I was looking for! Have a listen to it. I think you'd agree that if you weren't listening to it in this context, you'd still sense that it's a blues. It's largely due to the very standard opening three bars. After those your ear has decided it's a blues and is very "forgiving" after that.

Track # 9. **BLUE COMEDY**

Chord progression for Track # 9:

- Staff 1: F7, B \flat 7, F7, E7
- Staff 2: E \flat 7, E7, A7, A \flat 7 ALT.
- Staff 3: D \flat 7 ALT., F \sharp 7 ALT., G7

Bars 1 - 3 Standard I IV I progression. (feels 100% blues so far)

Bar 4- tri tone sub to the chord at bar 5.

Bar 5 - Ok, cracks forming in our argument! It's a bVII chord.

Not the ideal IV7, but it is still a cadence to the I chord.

Sometimes referred to as a "special resolution dominant", or "modal interchange chord (borrowed from the Mixolydian mode), or simply it contains the characteristic notes of the IV- chord. Whichever way you analyze it, it's simply a sound we're used to. (take the tune "tequila" for eg).

Bars 6-10 are testing the friendship a bit, but are all pretty much cyclical. (either by 5th or half step).

Note though bars 9-10. A standard cyclical progression to get to F would be G7 - C7 - F (V7/V - V7 - I)

Bars 9 and 10 are the tri tone subs for the G7 and C7. So at a stretch we could be expecting that F resolution, but we don't get it. (Harmony is sometimes expectation, not necessarily resolution).

Now the last three bars are interesting.

Looking firstly at the final two bars, they're a II7 chord (not V7/V as it's not in a setting to resolve to V), but II7. Music is largely about expectation. A nice V7 would leave no doubt where we are tonally, and we're all set for the I chord. II7 however is a modal interchange chord borrowed from the Lydian mode. (Theoretically that simply means that it's still no surprise to hear it resolve to I !!). For me, the II7 chord is about the extreme of our "acceptable" cadence chords. But, it is viable, and sounds very cool here.

Finally bar 10. Not as confident on this one. If you take a triad (say G). Play it, then a Gdim, then back to the G again. It's a great old 1920's rag sort of sound. (see example a)

Change the notes of the Dim chord enharmonically and they're the 3rd and 5th of the VII chord. (ex b)

There is merit in this argument, but it's usually reserved for the I chord.

EXAMPLE A

EXAMPLE B

Example A: G, G \dim , G, G

Example B: G, G, F \sharp \dim , G

And from Robin Balean (An Australian trumpeter living in Austria).

Robin has given us something from a slightly different angle. It's a composition of his, and he's provided me with a commentary on what's going on. Thanks very much Robin!

TRIPLANE

Robin Balean

"I've been enjoying your lick of the week series on your website. Here is my contribution to the abstract blues if you want to use it. The changes themselves are not abstract, but the phrasing is. I call it "Triplane" and wrote it a couple of months ago as an exercise for myself on using major triads. I also use the triads as a vehicle to help me phrase in different groupings of eighth notes, as well as for interesting over the bar line phrasing. I've written out the phrasing and accents and it this also makes it easy to see where I am switching triads.

Over the dominant chords I typically use the major triad built on the root (delivering the root, third and fifth of the chord) alternating with either the triad built on the dominant seventh (which provides the b7, 9 and 11), or the flat fifth (which instead gives the b5, b7 and b9 for a more altered feel). Hence you will see the G major, F major and Db major triads over the G7 chord in the first line. Notice the 3-3-2 phrasing in bar 3. The phrasing gets more adventurous over the C7 chord where I am alternating between C major and Gb major triads. On the E7, I have delayed the resolution to the E triad with fragments of the G and Db triads (i.e. I am still thinking G7).

On Am7 chord I am using the C and D major triads, i.e. the triads constructed from the minor third and the fourth (11th). The triad from the minor third provides the b3, 5 and b7 of the minor seventh chord, and the triad from the fourth gives the 11th, 6th and root.

On the D7 I go up the Ab triad starting on the Eb and then back down on the D triad. Then we come to the turnaround, with the triads Db major, G major, E major, C major and Ab major.

As I said, I composed this as an exercise for myself so it does sound a bit contrived. In reality you probably wouldn't want to play so many major triads. Also, while the rhythm is interesting, I have limited myself to eighth notes."

Great idea Robin. I believe in triadic practice to improve accuracy. This one goes another level! If anyone wants a brain workout give this one a go.

1. AND NOW FOR SOME MORE LICKS!

(I hope all of that harmony discussion has been interesting and maybe helpful to a few of you. Please let me know if it has been as feedback helps give me direction with the page).

There's always a bit of discussion going around about **pentatonic licks**. I don't imagine I'm going to offer anything new, but a different setting can always help.

A quick explanation of a pentatonic scale.

- Major pentatonic is made up of notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 of the major scale (see example 1)
- min pentatonic contains same notes of it's relative major (see example 2)

example 1	example 2
C maj pentatonic	A min pentatonic

One of the most popular methods of starting out with pentatonics is to play them in groups of four. (ascending and descending)

But if you're new to all of this there's plenty of books out there with exercises in them. We're here to look at a few licks!

The thing with pentatonics is that you can use a variety of them over the same chord, with each providing a different "flavor". It's a massive study to learn a few that you can employ yourself. (But many have spent the time and it's paid off of course).

eg, over a C7 you can use a:

Cmaj pent - very "inside" sound. gives you your 1,9, 3, 5 and 13 of the chord.

Cmin pent - provides a more "fourthy" kind of sound (1,#9, 4, 5, b7)

Ebmin pent - gets you right out there! (#9, #11, b13, b7, b9)

and the list goes on. But because there are so many variations a player can make a few his or her own.

Here we'll just take a look at a couple of lines built on the min pentatonic. I'd recommend only choosing one and sticking with that a bit till you get it under your fingers comfortably.

Lets get back to concert F (and transposed for your respective instruments) as that's where we've been spending most of our time (F tends to be one of the more popular keys for a blues too.)

The first one is based on a min pentatonic based on the root of the chord that you're playing over. So on the tonic chord F7, we'll be soloing over Fmin pent. Using the principle on the previous page (patterns of 4ths), we can come up with this:



The pattern could go on and on. For starters practice this over the I IV and V chords. After you blow over it enough and get comfortable with it, you'll start to find a few patterns of your own.

Lick # 5

This is really two licks built on the min pent scale I've labelled as "motif 1 &2", and simply transposed into the respective chords within the progression. In this way, you can go a long way with two little licks like this. A good start would be to just grab one motif and apply it to as many Dom7 chords that you can find. Note the 4th pattern (solid bracket), and 6 note motif which I have alternated on different chords (dotted).

Track # 10.



* note that the pattern is sometimes repeated in other chords. This is due to it being a rather symmetrical pattern.

This next one is based on the min pentatonic a min 3rd above the root of the chord. (a lot more thinking!)

As this is really quite a bit to get your head around, you could start by just learning one lick over your choice of chord in the blues progression, and mix it in with a lick or two from the previous page. As with lots of "vocab", these licks will start to come out more automatically over time and add depth to your solos.



Lick #6

Here's some licks to try using this particular pentatonic.

Track # 11



And to close out this epic edition (next one will be very small), here's a few of those lines put into the context of a 12 bar blues. (sometimes fragmented).

Remember, this stuff's not learnt overnight. Personally, my style of soloing doesn't call for this approach much. I just have a few that I bring in when I want to "hip it up a bit", and give some diversity to a solo. Other's devote a lot of time to it and it becomes a characteristic sound to their soloing.

Track # 12

Musical notation for Track # 12, a 12-bar blues in C minor. The notation is spread across three staves. The first staff contains measures 1-3 with chords F7, Bb7, and F7 (triplets). The second staff contains measures 4-6 with chords Bb7, F7, Dm7, and G7. The third staff contains measures 7-9 with chords C7, Bb7, and F7, ending with a 3x repeat sign.