

CONTENTS

About the Author.....	3
Introduction	4
How to Use This Book.....	4
Working with the Play-Along Tracks	5
Introduction to Blues Harmony	6
Woldenberg Park Blues <i>(Funk Blues in A)</i>	14
Mississippi Greenbelt <i>(Southern Slow Blues in B\flat)</i>	18
Lafayette Square Blues <i>(Funk Blues in B)</i>	22
Regent's Park Blues <i>(Rock Blues in C)</i>	26
Golden Gate Blues <i>(Rock Blues in C\sharp)</i>	31
Dinosaur Valley <i>(Texas Blues in D)</i>	36
Rio Grande Blues <i>(Texas Blues in E\flat)</i>	40
Mustang Island <i>(Texas Blues in E)</i>	44
Oak Mountain Blues <i>(Funk Blues in F)</i>	48
Millennium Blues <i>(Chicago Blues in F\sharp)</i>	53
Great River Road <i>(Southern Blues in G)</i>	58
Marquette Park Blues <i>(Chicago Jazz Blues in A\flat)</i>	62
Pedernales Falls <i>(Texas Blues in A Minor)</i>	66
Clarkco Park Blues <i>(Southern Blues in G Minor)</i>	71
Buckingham Fountain <i>(Chicago Blues in E Minor)</i>	75
Appendix: Music Theory and Scales.....	79

SONGS BY CATEGORY

FUNK BLUES

Woldenberg Park Blues (70 BPM)	14
Lafayette Square Blues (80 BPM)	22
Oak Mountain Blues (135 BPM)	48

SOUTHERN BLUES

Mississippi Greenbelt (60 BPM)	18
Great River Road (150 BPM).....	58
Clarkco Park Blues (100 BPM)	71

ROCK BLUES

Regent's Park Blues (97 BPM).....	26
Golden Gate Blues (105 BPM).....	31

TEXAS BLUES

Dinosaur Valley (105 BPM)	36
Rio Grande Blues (120 BPM).....	40
Mustang Island (120 BPM Swing).....	44
Pedernales Falls (180 BPM)	66

CHICAGO BLUES

Millennium Blues (135 BPM Swing).....	53
Marquette Park Blues (150 BPM Swing)	62
Buckingham Fountain (200 BPM Swing)	75

INTRODUCTION TO BLUES HARMONY

One of the most important goals of this book is to help you improvise over the chord progression (or *changes*) of the blues. The first step to understanding chord progressions is harmony

Diatonic Harmony and the Blues

The notes of a major scale define the notes and chords for a key. If we number each note in the scale and build a chord on each one, we get the *diatonic harmonies* of the key. Roman numerals are used to express the numbers for these chords. As you'll see below, the most basic 12-bar (12 measure) blues uses just the three *primary chords*, which are I (1), IV (4), and V (5), and they are all usually dominant 7th chords (1–3–5–b7). In diatonic harmony, the dominant chord is found on the fifth note of the key, so A7 is the V7 of D Major, D7 is the V7 of G Major and E7 is the V7 of the key of A Major. In the blues, the chords used in the progression are usually all dominant 7th chords even though they sometimes include notes not in that key. Roman numerals are still used to number each of the notes of the scale, and to identify each chord in that progression.

Roman Numerals	
I or i.....	1
II or ii.....	2
III or iii.....	3
IV or iv.....	4
V or v.....	5
VI or vi.....	6
VII or vii.....	7

Major Blues

Here is the basic major 12-bar blues form expressed in Roman numerals and chord names in the key of A:

I7	I7	I7	I7	IV7	IV7	I7	I7	V7	IV7	I7	V7
A7	A7	A7	A7	D7	D7	A7	A7	E7	D7	A7	E7

Here it is in music notation and TAB:

	I A7			IV D7		I A7		V E7	IV D7	I A7	V E7
T	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
A	6	6	6	6	7	7	6	6	7	6	7
B	5	5	5	5	5	7	5	7	5	5	7
B	7	7	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	7	7
B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	7	5	5	7

Playing Scales Over Blues Changes—Targeting

The I chord for the blues in the key of A is A7. Because the 7th of that chord is not found in the A major scale the A major scale won't work when you solo. Instead, you will need to use the A Mixolydian mode which has the same notes as the A major scale except the 7th, which is lowered a half step. The formula for a Mixolydian mode is 1–2–3–4–5–6–b7, which always works with an A7 chord.

	D Major Scale	A Mixolydian mode	A Major Scale									
T		4	6	7	5	7	8	5	7	9	10	
A		4	6	7	5	7	8	5	7	9	10	
B	5	7	4	5	7	4	6	7	5	7	4	5
B	5	7	4	5	7	4	6	7	5	7	4	5

Overview

One of the most important blues styles to master is the *slow blues*. Every major performer of blues has their own slow blues style, from B. B. King to Jimi Hendrix, and from Freddie King to Robben Ford. Developing this sound takes time and maturity. As your playing develops, you'll learn when to use space, and when to really wail; when to play simply and meaningfully by limiting yourself, and when to cry or unleash.

The feel of this tune brings up a new concept of time. Each beat in the rhythmic current is subdivided into three parts with four beats in each measure, which is notated in $\frac{12}{8}$ time. If you aren't used to reading in this time signature, it is basically felt as $\frac{4}{4}$ but with a *swing feel* (it has a triplet feel). When counting $\frac{12}{8}$, don't feel all 12 eighth notes equally. Rather, emphasize the eighth notes, 1, 4, 7, and 10, which represent the four dotted-quarter-note pulses.

- General form: I-I-I-I-IV-IV-I-I-V-IV-I-V
- Key: B \flat Major
- $\text{♩} = 60$ BPM

Listening Suggestions

B. B. King: "Sweet Sixteen"

This is from the classic album *Live in Cook County Jail*.

Jimi Hendrix: "Red House"

Jimi plays a slow blues like no other. Check out the *Stages* albums, discs 2 and 3, for his phenomenal control of dynamics and contrast between subtle and screaming.

Elmore James: "It Hurts Me Too"

Elmore James was a fantastic, singer, guitarist (especially with slide), and songwriter.

Soloing

Try all the licks with different *dynamics* (varying the volume from loud to soft): soft and quiet, medium volumes, and hard and loud. Use three different harmonic concepts on this song:

1. *Target Every Chord*: Play all Mixolydian, major blues, or dominant pentatonic off the root of each chord.
2. *Major vs. Minor*: For the B \flat 7 chord, play the B \flat Major Blues scale, but for E \flat 7 and F7, play the B \flat Minor Blues scale.
3. *All Minor*: Play the B \flat Minor Blues scale for the B \flat 7 and E \flat 7 chords, and play F Minor Blues for F7.

	Shape 1	Shape 2	Shape 3	Shape 4	Shape 5
B \flat Minor Blues					
E \flat Dominant Pentatonic					
F Dominant Pentatonic					
B \flat Major Blues					