

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

THIS BOOK is *not* progressive in that the riffs are not presented in order of increasing difficulty. Instead they are grouped by their function in a musical setting: comping patterns, fills, turn-arounds, etc. You should therefore proceed according to interest and necessity.

Practice each hand separately at a manageable tempo before putting both hands together. Sound like your old music lessons? It should—it works!

Work these riffs out in various keys. Eventually you should learn these riffs in all keys, but be practical and start with C, F, B \flat , G, and then the “guitar” keys: E, A, D, G, and C. Those of you who play an electronic keyboard should by all means resist the temptation to transpose digitally—it will catch you red-faced someday.

The riffs in this volume are presented the way I *play them*, which is neither the correct nor the




only way of doing so. You will see and hear occasions where the transcription is not exact, due to subtleties

in the performance that could not be notated except by unnecessarily complex notation. In these instances you should play both what you hear and what you see. In *all* instances you should push, pull, and generally massage the notes until you arrive at that point where the riff becomes your own—recognizably blues yet unique to your style.

If blues music is not a passion for you the reader, the ability to play even the basics is most certainly a skill every well-rounded pop pianist should have in his repertoire. In fact, the “cross pollenization” of blues music with other styles is so evident in contemporary music that many of the riffs presented in this volume will play just as well in a jazz, country, or a rock setting, requiring nothing more than an “attitude” adjustment from the player.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Much of the music in this book is played in a triplet feel, where two eighth notes starting on a downbeat equal . In instances where triplets and eighth notes appear simultaneously, as when the right hand plays three triplet eighths against the left hand's two eighths, it is the third triplet of the right hand that coincides with the left hand's second eighth note.

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The Pentatonic Scale

The pentatonic scale is used extensively in the blues. This is a five-tone scale that is comprised of scale steps 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 from the diatonic major scale. Passing tones are added between scale steps 2-3, and 5-6.

1 fingering: 2 3 4 1 2 3 1 2

scale degrees: 1 2 3 5 6 (8)

Pentatonic Exercise

Pentatonic exercise is one way of grouping the notes of the scale for solos and fills. Included are two variations of the exercise; Variation #2 includes the two passing tones. Slide the third finger—do not pull your hand.

2

C Variation #1 Variation #2

5 2 3 2 1 5 2 3 2 1 5 2 3 3 2 3 2 1 5 2 3 3 2 3 2 1

Suspensions

Suspensions are a common way to create movement without going anywhere, and are a great way of killing time while playing one chord. The different suspensions include the sus4, sus2, sus4/sus2, and the full suspension, which is the same as the 2nd-inversion IV chord.

3 C C^{sus4} C^{sus2} C^{sus4/sus2} F/C