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Online audio is included with this book. This recording can make learning with the book easier and more enjoyable. The symbol shown at the left appears next to every example that is on the recording. Use the audio to help ensure that you're capturing the feel of the examples and interpreting the rhythms correctly. The numeral below the symbol corresponds directly to the audio track number. Track 1 provides tuning notes for your guitar.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rob Fletcher performs extensively throughout New York and New England in the Fletcher and Manzi duo, as a solo artist, and in a variety of blues, R&B and jazz band settings. He has taught and performed with blues guitar legend Ronnie Earl, performed at Woodstock '94, opened for the Crash Test Dummies and performed with Trey Anastasio of Phish. The author of *Blues Harmonica for Beginners*, Rob is also a columnist for *American Harmonica Newsmagazine* and *Harmonica World*. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in jazz guitar performance from the State University of New York at New Paltz and teaches blues guitar, harmonica, voice and songwriting at the National Guitar Workshop. Rob resides in Boston, Massachusetts, where he works with corporations combining music and team-building.



PHOTO BY DIANE PELL

CHAPTER 5

TEXAS SHUFFLE

In 1940s Texas, a “shuffle rhythm” meant something very specific. R&B was then coming into its own, and it sounded an awful lot like the blues. Players such as T-Bone Walker, Albert Collins, Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, Johnny Copeland and Long John Hunter honed this sound into an art form which has spread throughout the U.S. blues scene.

There are two parts to the *Texas shuffle*. The first part is the bass line, which is played by the piano player, by the bass player, by the guitar player or by all three simultaneously.

The bass lines in examples 17–19 are in the style of those found in T-Bone Walker’s up-tempo songs. After you’ve mastered them, experiment by changing the quarter notes to eighth notes, and vice versa.

17

12.1

Swing 8ths

A G **B** G

18

12.2

Swing 8ths

A G **B** G7

19

12.3

G7

CHAPTER 9

CHORD COMPING RHYTHMS

Blues grooves can be broken down into two essentials: the bass line and the chords (harmony) played over it. In this chapter, we'll look at *comping* (providing a chordal accompaniment for a melody or a solo), and in particular, the ways in which you can personalize the chords you use.

Let's take a look at some of the classic chord rhythms. Think of these as safe havens whenever you're adrift in the merciless sea known as the blues shuffle. For slow blues, use all triplets or all eighth notes, as in example 46. Listen to Albert Collins's "What You Gonna Do When the Welfare Turns Its Back On You?," Albert King's "The Sky Is Crying" and "Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven," as well as Frank Frost's "Midnight Prowler" on the real-deal soundtrack for the 1993 documentary *Deep Blues*. After you've mastered these rhythms, try substituting other chords, such as those you'll find in Appendices 3 and 4 (page 93 and 94).

46 [A] [B] *Swing 8ths*
E7(I)] = Strum chord

26.1

You can comp medium to fast shuffles with either eighth notes or staccato quarter notes. Check out T-Bone Walker's sides on the Imperial label, as well as B. B. King's earliest recordings. T-Bone's influence soaks through on every track.

47

Bb7(I)

When the tempo increases as you're comping, you no longer have to carry the rhythm. Let the drums and bass keep it steady as you find the right places to punctuate and propel the song forward. Example 48 is a classic jazz-blues comping pattern used by everyone from Robert Jr. Lockwood to Albert Collins to Ronnie Earl.

48

Bb7(I)

26.2