

COMPLETE
EDITION
ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR

Beginning • Intermediate • Mastering

LOU MANZI



Stream or download the audio content for this book.
To access, visit: alfred.com/redeem
Enter the following code:

CONTENTS

Beginning Acoustic Blues Guitar	2
Intermediate Acoustic Blues Guitar	97
Mastering Acoustic Blues Guitar	169



Alfred Music
P.O. Box 10003
Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003
alfred.com

Copyright © 2010 by Alfred Music
All rights reserved. Printed in USA.

No part of this book shall be reproduced, arranged, adapted, recorded, publicly performed, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means without written permission from the publisher. In order to comply with copyright laws, please apply for such written permission and/or license by contacting the publisher at alfred.com/permissions.

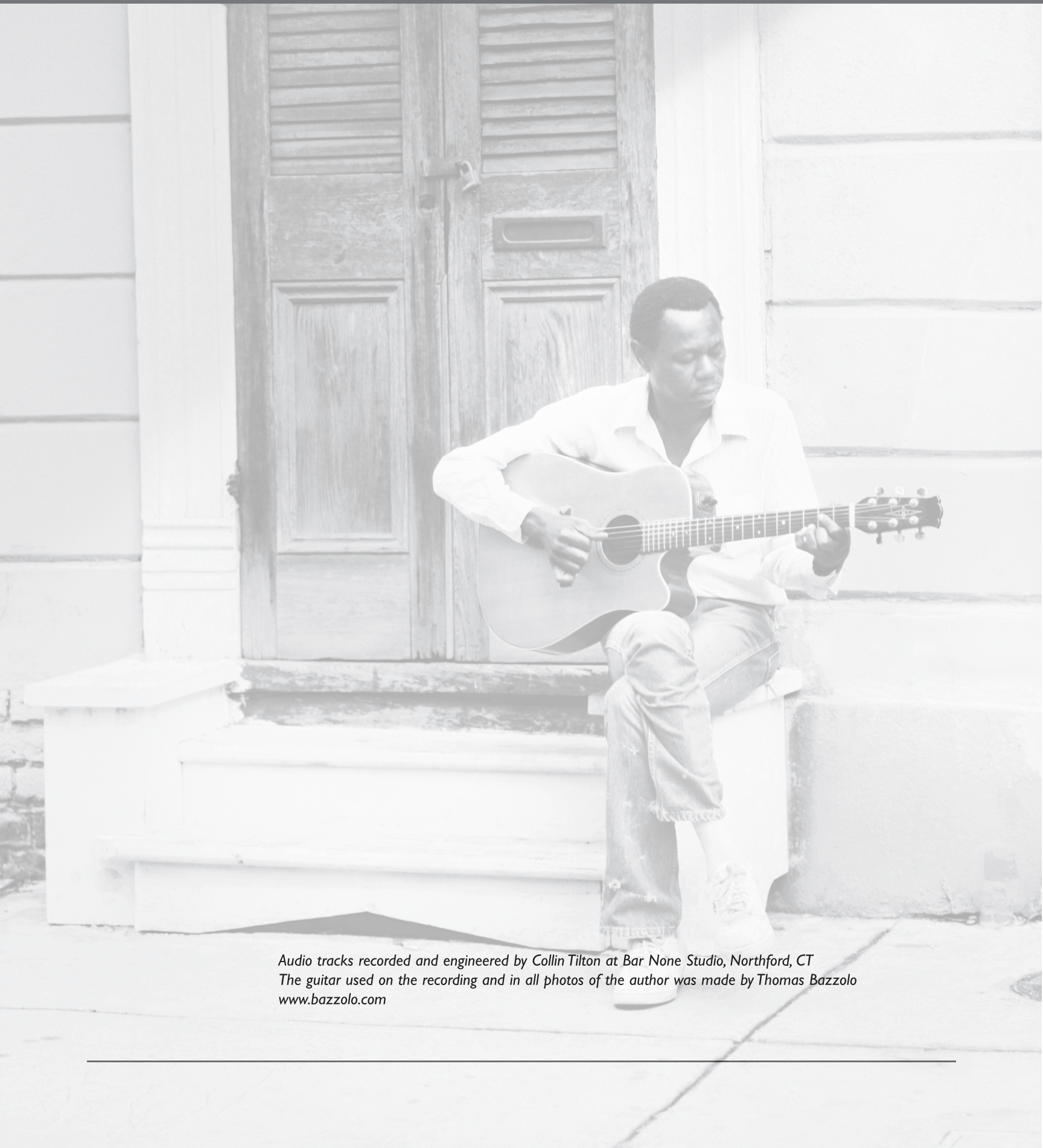
ISBN-10: 0-7390-7400-8 (Book & Online Audio)
ISBN-13: 978-0-7390-7400-8 (Book & Online Audio)

Cover photo © David Redfern / Redferns

BEGINNING

ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR



*Audio tracks recorded and engineered by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT
The guitar used on the recording and in all photos of the author was made by Thomas Bazzolo
www.bazzolo.com*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS BOOK	6
------------------------------	----------

CHAPTER 1—Getting Started	7
Choosing Strings	7
The Open Strings	7
Tuning	8
Musical Pitches and the Fretboard	9
Standard Music Notation	11
Reading Tablature	15
Reading Scale and Chord Diagrams	16
Reading Chord Charts	17
Posture	18
Right-Hand Technique	19
Left-Hand Technique	19

CHAPTER 2—12-Bar Blues Progressions	20
Easiest 12-Bar Blues	20
<i>Easiest 12-Bar Blues</i>	20
<i>Easiest 12-Bar Blues in E</i>	22
Most Common 12-Bar Blues	23
<i>Most Common 12-Bar Blues in A</i>	23
<i>Most Common 12-Bar Blues in E</i>	24
<i>Most Common 12-Bar Blues in D</i>	25
<i>Most Common 12-Bar Blues in G</i>	25

CHAPTER 3—Blues Rhythm & Theory	26
Swing Eighths	26
Intervals	26

CHAPTER 4—Blues Shuffles	27
Two-String Chords	27
<i>Shuffle Blues in A</i>	30
<i>The 5, 6, ^b7 Blues in A</i>	31
<i>Shuffle Blues in E</i>	32

CHAPTER 5—Palm Muting	33
<i>Shufflin' the Palm Mute</i>	33
<i>Palm Muting in A</i>	34

CHAPTER 6—Major Scale Theory Review	35
--	-----------

CHAPTER 7—Chord Theory and Key Signatures	37
Major and Minor Triads	37
Diminished and Augmented Triads	38
7 Chords	39
Diatonic Harmony	41
Key Signatures	42

CHAPTER 8—Boogie Woogie Blues Patterns	43
<i>Boogie Woogie in G</i>	43
<i>Boogie Woogie in E</i>	44

CHAPTER 9—Blues Strums	45
<i>12-Bar Blues in C</i>	45
<i>¹²/₈ Blues</i>	46
<i>Two-Strum Blues in A</i>	47
<i>Strummin' in E</i>	48

CHAPTER 10—Blues Soloing	49
The Minor Pentatonic Scale	49
The Major Pentatonic Scale	52
The Blues Scale	53
Phrasing	55

CHAPTER 11—Left-Hand Techniques	56
Hammer-Ons	56
Pull-Offs	57
Bending	58
Slides	60
Vibrato	61
Combining Techniques	62

CHAPTER 12—More Blues Strums and Right-Hand Patterns	63	CHAPTER 18—Minor Blues	83
<i>B^b Blues</i>	63	<i>Minor Blues in A</i>	83
Arpeggios.....	64	<i>Three-Strum Blues</i>	84
<i>Arpeggion Blues</i>	64	<i>Blues for B. B.</i>	84
The Sixteenth-Note Strum.....	65		
<i>Funky Blues in B</i>	65	CHAPTER 19—Fingerstyle Blues	85
Upbeat Strum.....	66	Minor Blues for Rev. Gary—Preparation.....	85
<i>Upbeat Blues in F</i>	66	<i>Minor Blues for Rev. Gary</i>	86
		Blues for Mississippi John—Preparation.....	87
CHAPTER 13—Turnarounds	67	<i>Blues for Mississippi John</i>	88
		Keep on Pickin’—Preparation.....	89
CHAPTER 14—Riff Style Blues	71	<i>Keep on Pickin’</i>	90
<i>Riff Blues in E Minor</i>	71	Blues for Lightnin’—Preparation.....	91
<i>Riffin’ in F</i>	72	<i>Blues for Lightnin’</i>	91
<i>Octave Blues</i>	73	Boogie Woogie Time—Preparation.....	93
<i>Funky Blues in G Minor</i>	74	<i>Boogie Woogie Time</i>	94
CHAPTER 15—Moveable Two-String Patterns	75	APPENDIX—Chord Fingerings	95
<i>Shuffle in G</i>	76		
<i>Chuck’s Blues</i>	77	FINAL THOUGHTS	96
<i>Shufflin’ in E</i>	78		
CHAPTER 16—Barre Chords	79		
<i>A^b Barre Blues</i>	80		
CHAPTER 17—Eight-Bar Blues	81		
<i>Key to the Turnpike</i>	81		
<i>Too Long Blues</i>	82		

00



Track 1

Online audio is included with this book to make learning easier and more enjoyable. The symbol shown on the left appears next to every example in the book that features an audio track. Use the recordings to ensure you’re capturing the feel of the examples and interpreting the rhythms correctly. The track number below the symbol corresponds directly to the example you want to hear (example numbers are above the icon). All the track numbers are unique to each “book” within this volume, meaning every book has its own Track 1, Track 2, and so on. (For example, *Beginning Acoustic Blues Guitar* starts with Track 1, as does *Intermediate Acoustic Blues Guitar* and *Mastering Acoustic Blues Guitar*.) Track 1 for each book will help you tune your guitar.

See page 1 for instructions on how to access the online audio.

CHAPTER 1

Getting Started

CHOOSING STRINGS

Walk into any well stocked music store and you will see the inevitable “Wall of Strings.” Choosing a set of strings for your guitar can be confusing for a beginner.

How often you need to change your strings depends on how much you play and your personal taste. Newer strings will always sound brighter than older ones. Older strings lose their tone, do not stay in tune as well and may even start to rust. Don’t let your strings get to that point. You should change them when they start to lose their brilliance.

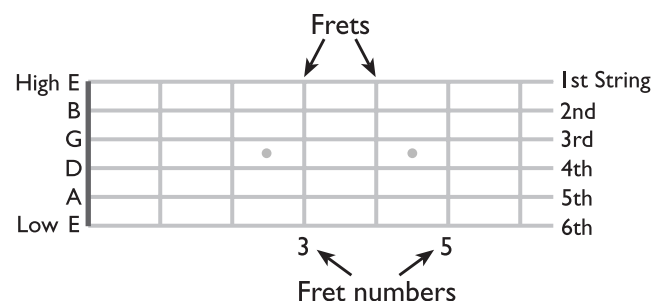
To play acoustically, you need *acoustic guitar strings*. The 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th strings are thin steel cores wound in thin bronze.

Strings come in different thicknesses or *gauges*. Most of the sets you’ll see in stores are *extra light*, *light* and *medium* gauge. Try different gauges now and then to see which you prefer for your guitar. As a rule, the thicker the string, the richer the tone. However, there is a disadvantage to using thicker strings. They are more difficult to play. The thicker the string, the more effort is needed to press the strings against the frets. Keep in mind that certain chords are much easier to play with thinner strings. Another reason to use light gauge strings is that you’ll be learning how to *bend* strings. This requires you to push or pull a string either up or down. This is easier to accomplish with lighter strings.

You can also use *custom light* gauge strings, which are somewhere between light and extra light. The sound is good and they are easy to play, which is very important if you play a lot. It is important to keep your hands in good health.

THE OPEN STRINGS

The thinnest string, the one closest to the floor, is the *1st string*. The others are numbered consecutively to the thickest string, the *6th string*, which is closest to the ceiling. It will be helpful to memorize the names of the strings (included in the chart below) as soon as possible. The sentence, “**E**rnie’s **A**nt **D**oes **G**et **B**ig **E**ventually,” can help you in this process.



INTERMEDIATE

ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR



Audio tracks recorded by Jason Alborough at WorkshopLive.com, Pittsfield, MA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS BOOK	100
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER 1—Blues Rhythm 101

Rhythmic Notation	101
Basic Strums	101
The Triplet “Feel”	102

CHAPTER 2—Blues Theory 104

The $\flat 3$, $\flat 7$ and $\flat 5$	104
Transposing	106

CHAPTER 3—Blues Progressions 107

Easiest 12-Bar Blues	107
12-Bar Blues in B^{\flat}	108
Most Common 12-Bar Blues	109
Quick-Four Blues	109
Easiest and Most Common Blues Combined	110
Mojo Blues	110
16-Bar Blues	111
Hoochie Blues	111
9-Bar Blues	112
Wolf’s Blues	112

CHAPTER 4—Shuffles and Two-String Patterns 113

Shuffle in A	114
Straight 8ths in E	115
$\flat 7$ Blues	116
Blues for Muddy	117
Syncopated Blues in C	118

CHAPTER 5—Soloing 119

Left-Hand Technique Review	119
Minor Pentatonic Scale	120
Major Pentatonic Scale	122
Blues Scale	123
Combining Scales	125
Three Scales in 12 Bars	126

CHAPTER 6—Chord Voicings 127

Triad Voicings	127
Sliding Minor	128
Hammer-On Triad Blues	129
Dominant 7th Chord Voicings	130
Dominant 7th Blues	131
Blues in $\frac{12}{8}$	132

CHAPTER 7—Boogie Woogie Blues 133

Sixteenth-Note Boogie Woogie	134
$\flat 3$ Boogie Woogie in E	135
$\flat 3$ Boogie Woogie in F	136

CHAPTER 8—Intervals 137

CHAPTER 9—3rds, 6ths and 10ths	139	CHAPTER 12—Open Tunings	157
3rds	139	Open G Tuning.....	157
6ths.....	140	<i>Blues in Open G</i>	158
10ths	141	Open A Tuning.....	159
3rds, 6ths and 10ths in Blues Style.....	142	Open D Tuning.....	159
<i>Solo with 3rds</i>	143	<i>Open D Blues</i>	160
<i>Sliding 6th Blues</i>	144	Open E Tuning.....	160
<i>Shufflin' 6ths</i>	145		
<i>Blues in 10ths</i>	146		
CHAPTER 10—Arpeggios	147	CHAPTER 13—Boogie Blues	161
Major Arpeggios	147		
Minor Arpeggios.....	147	CHAPTER 14—More Fingerstyle Blues	163
Dominant 7th Arpeggios	148	<i>Blues for Robert</i>	163
Minor 7th Arpeggios.....	149	<i>Drop D Blues</i>	164
Major 6th Arpeggios.....	150	<i>Blues for Mance</i>	165
		<i>Blind Lemon Blues</i>	166
CHAPTER 11—9th, 13th and Diminished 7th Chords	151	<i>Boogie Woogie in G</i>	167
<i>9th Chord Blues in G</i>	152		
<i>Funky Blues in E</i>	153	FINAL THOUGHTS	168
<i>13th Chord Blues</i>	154		
<i>Diminished 7th Blues</i>	155		
<i>Jazz Blues</i>	156		

CHAPTER 1

Blues Rhythm

RHYTHMIC NOTATION

Rhythm refers to patterns of long and short sounds and silences. *Rhythmic notation* is used to show these patterns when playing chords.

Rhythmic Notation Values

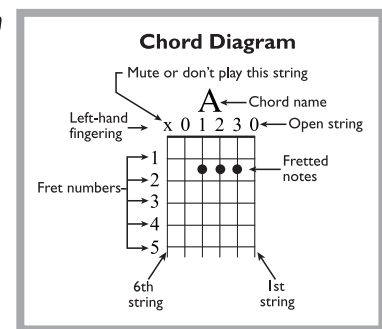
Whole note (4 beats) Half notes (2 beats each) Quarter notes (1 beat each) Eighth notes (½ beat each)

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Sometimes just the chord name is written above the staff. Sometimes a *chord diagram* (see illustration to the right) is placed above the staff.

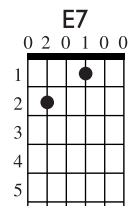
A7

or



BASIC STRUMS

Let's start with a couple basic rhythms before moving on to more involved blues strums. Count a steady "1, 2, 3, 4" and tap your foot on each beat. Now strum an E7 chord (see diagram to the right) in quarter notes—one strum per beat. This symbol ■ indicates a *downstroke* (strum or pick downward). Notice the sharps at the beginning of the staff. This is the *key signature*, which tells you all the notes that are either sharp or flat throughout the entire piece. This example is in the key of E.



■ = Downstroke

1

Key signature E7

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Now let's strum steady eighth notes—two strums per beat. Be sure to count the rhythm as indicated under the staff (1-&, 2-&, etc.). This symbol ∨ indicates an *upstroke* (strum or pick upward).

∨ = Upstroke

2

E7

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

MASTERING

ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR



Audio tracks recorded by Jason Alborough at WorkshopLive.com, Pittsfield, MA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS BOOK	172
CHAPTER 1—Review: Learning the Fretboard	173
Intervals and Scales	173
Chromatic Scale.....	173
Transposing	175
CHAPTER 2—Fingerstyle in A	176
<i>12 to the Bar</i>	176
<i>Sixthsville</i>	177
<i>Singin' Away in A</i>	178
CHAPTER 3—Fingerstyle in C, Amin and G	179
<i>Rockin' with the Reverend</i>	179
<i>White Hollow Blues</i>	180
<i>Mississippi Man</i>	182
CHAPTER 4—Minor Pentatonic Scale	184
Minor Pentatonic Scale Theory	184
Minor Pentatonic Scale—Form 1	186
Minor Pentatonic Scale—Form 2.....	188
Connecting Forms 1 and 2.....	190
<i>Blues Backing Track</i>	191
CHAPTER 5—Fingerstyle in E	192
<i>Big Bill's Blues</i>	192
<i>Up the Fifth</i>	193
<i>Leaving Chicago</i>	194
CHAPTER 6—More Minor Pentatonic Scale Forms	196
Minor Pentatonic Scale—Form 3.....	196
Connecting Forms 2 and 3	197
Minor Pentatonic Scale—Form 4.....	198
Connecting Forms 3 and 4.....	200
CHAPTER 7—Fingerstyle in Drop D	202
<i>The Lowdown D Blues</i>	202
<i>Willie Was Here</i>	203
CHAPTER 8—Another Minor Pentatonic Scale Form	204
Minor Pentatonic Scale—Form 5.....	204
Connecting Forms 4 and 5	205
CHAPTER 9—Open Tunings	206
Open D Tuning	206
<i>Down Deep in D</i>	206
Open G Tuning	207
<i>Blues for Skip</i>	207
<i>Keep It Steady Freddie</i>	208
CHAPTER 10—Major Pentatonic Scale	210
Major Pentatonic Scale—Form 1	211
Major Pentatonic Scale—Form 2.....	212
Major Pentatonic Scale—Form 3	212
Major Pentatonic Scale—Form 4.....	213
Major Pentatonic Scale—Form 5.....	213

CHAPTER 11—Slide in Standard Tuning	214
<i>Hit the Six</i>	219
CHAPTER 12—Blues Scale	220
Blues Scale—Form 1	220
Blues Scale—Form 2	220
Blues Scale—Form 3	221
Blues Scale—Form 4	222
Blues Scale—Form 5	222
CHAPTER 13—Moving Bass	223
<i>Boppin' the Bass</i>	223
<i>Walkin' with Lou</i>	224
CHAPTER 14—Modes	226
CHAPTER 15—Mixolydian Mode	227
Mixolydian Mode—Form 1	227
Mixolydian Mode—Form 2	228
Using the Mixolydian Mode	229
<i>Mixing It Up</i>	229
CHAPTER 16—Slide in Open Tunings	230
<i>Jammin' in G</i>	230
<i>D for Dee</i>	232
<i>Dusty Road Blues</i>	233
CHAPTER 17—Dorian Mode	234
Dorian Mode—Form 1	235
Using the Dorian Mode	236
Dorian Mode—Form 2	236
<i>Dorian Days</i>	237
CHAPTER 18—Jazz Blues	238
<i>Jazz Meets the Blues</i>	238
<i>Tune for Toots</i>	238
<i>Major Minor Moment</i>	239
CHAPTER 19—Left-Hand Muting Techniques	240
<i>Muting in A</i>	240
Using Muting Techniques When Improvising	241
<i>C Riff Blues</i>	242
CHAPTER 20—Popping the Bass	243
<i>Pop Goes the Bass Note</i>	243
<i>Down in the Delta</i>	244
<i>Hot Time</i>	245
FINAL THOUGHTS	246
APPENDIX—Artists	247
Early Blues Players	247
Contemporary Blues Players	247

CHAPTER 1

Review: Learning the Fretboard

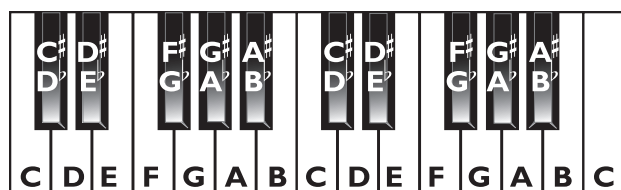
INTERVALS AND SCALES

Remember, an *interval* is the distance in pitch between two notes. Two intervals you should be very familiar with are the *half step* (the distance of one fret) and the *whole step* (the distance of two frets). An *octave* is the distance of 12 half steps between two notes with the same name. A *scale* is a series of tones arranged in a particular pattern of half steps and whole steps.

CHROMATIC SCALE

An understanding of the *chromatic scale* will help you to name the notes on the fretboard. The chromatic scale is a scale consisting of all 12 half steps in an octave. So it is made up of all the *natural* notes (A–B–C–D–E–F–G) and all the notes in between (the *altered* notes, see below). The illustration below starts and ends with C, but the chromatic scale can start on any note. The white keys on the keyboard are the natural notes and the black keys are the *altered* notes. These are notes modified by a *sharp* (which raises the pitch of a note by a half step) or *flat* (which lowers the pitch of a note by a half step).

The Chromatic Scale on the Keyboard



Notice there are no sharps or flats between E and F and B and C. Notice also that the black keys have two names (for example: C#/D^b, D#/E^b, etc.). These are *enharmonic equivalents*, which are two notes that have the same pitch (sound exactly the same) but are spelled differently.