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MINOR-KEY SHUFFLE

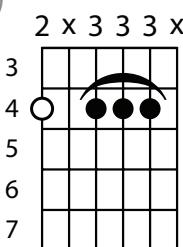
In this lesson, we'll continue to explore the $\frac{12}{8}$ feel but in the context of a *minor-key shuffle* (a shuffle with chords based on a minor key rather than a major key). The $\frac{12}{8}$ feel is used in a lot of slow- to medium-tempo minor blues tunes. Subdividing the beat into eighth-note triplets helps propel the music forward and keeps a slow tempo from dragging or rushing. Also in this lesson, we'll talk about sliding into chord changes from below, the essence of the shuffle, $\frac{12}{8}$ fingerstyle feel, and $\frac{12}{8}$ strumming patterns with chord fills. Finally, we'll put it all together in a 12-bar blues progression in A Minor.

Sliding into Chords

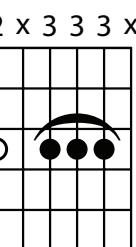
You can always get to a chord by sliding into it. We often forget this simple idea but shouldn't, because it sounds great and is a big part of the blues. For example, in the following A Minor blues progression, we'll slide into the A Minor chord from the chord a half step below, A♭ Minor. In addition, we'll slide into the Dmin7 chord from D♭min7. Check out the diagrams for these chords below.

Ex.
10

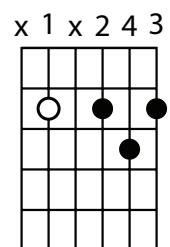
A♭min7



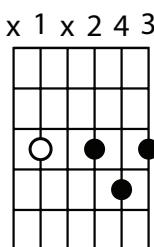
Amin7



D♭min7



Dmin7



Now, let's play the example.

Ex.
11

A♭min7 Amin7

D♭min7 Dmin7

Guitar tab for measures 1-2. The first measure shows a 3-note slide from A♭min7 to Amin7. The second measure shows a 3-note slide from D♭min7 to Dmin7. Both measures are in 4/4 time with a treble clef. Slides are indicated by horizontal lines with arrows, and the number '3' indicates the third note of each chord.

A♭min7 Amin7

A♭min7 Amin7

Guitar tab for measures 3-4. The first measure shows a 3-note slide from A♭min7 to Amin7. The second measure shows a 3-note slide from D♭min7 to Dmin7. Both measures are in 4/4 time with a treble clef. Slides are indicated by horizontal lines with arrows, and the number '3' indicates the third note of each chord.

A♭min7 Amin7

D♭min7 Dmin7

Guitar tab for measures 5-6. The first measure shows a 3-note slide from A♭min7 to Amin7. The second measure shows a 3-note slide from D♭min7 to Dmin7. Both measures are in 4/4 time with a treble clef. Slides are indicated by horizontal lines with arrows, and the number '3' indicates the third note of each chord.

A♭min7 Amin7

A♭min7 Amin7

Guitar tab for measures 7-8. The first measure shows a 3-note slide from A♭min7 to Amin7. The second measure shows a 3-note slide from D♭min7 to Dmin7. Both measures are in 4/4 time with a treble clef. Slides are indicated by horizontal lines with arrows, and the number '3' indicates the third note of each chord.

Four to the Floor in A

Following is another 8-bar form played with a *four-to-the-floor* strumming pattern, where all the strums are played as quarter notes. For a cool rhythmic effect, release pressure from your left-hand fingers after each strum. To get this technique down, be sure to watch the video.

The diagram shows three chord diagrams for A7, D7, and E7. Each diagram includes a finger placement chart above the fretboard and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it.

- A7:** Finger placement: 1 x 2 4 3 x. Fretboard: 1 (x), 2 (x), 3 (x), 4 (x), 5 (open), 6 (x), 7 (x).
- D7:** Finger placement: x 3 2 4 1 x. Fretboard: 1 (x), 2 (x), 3 (x), 4 (x), 5 (open), 6 (x), 7 (x).
- E7:** Finger placement: 0 2 x 1 4 0. Fretboard: 1 (x), 2 (x), 3 (x), 4 (x), 5 (x), 6 (x), 7 (x).

Ex. 20: Musical notation for the 'Four to the Floor in A' example. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a repeating pattern of four measures for each chord: A7, D7, A7, D7.

In the Style of “Key to the Highway”

Now, we'll do a variation of the 8-bar form that's in the style of the Skip James tune “Key to the Highway.” Check out the cool chord fills in measures 2 and 4. Plus, in the last measure, there's a great interval phrase that should be played using *hybrid picking*, where the bottom notes are sounded with a pick and the upper notes are plucked with a right-hand finger. Let's play the example.

Ex. 21: Musical notation for the 'In the Style of Key to the Highway' example. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a repeating pattern of four measures for each chord: A7, D7, A7, D7. The bass line is provided below the staff.