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### About the Video

A companion video, hosted by author Steve Trovato, is included with this book and can be streamed online or downloaded. See page 1 for instructions for accessing the video. The video features clear demonstrations of the lessons and music examples in this book. Watch it while following along with the book for the best learning experience. The camera icon to the left indicates there is a video lesson to accompany that section in the book.



### About the Audio

Companion audio is also accessible online. The lead guitar licks and solos are demonstrated so that you can tell how the examples should sound. Also included are full-band demonstration tracks as well as play-along tracks that you can use to practice your lead guitar playing. The speaker icon to the left indicates there is an audio track to accompany the example in the book.

## Blues Form

The most common form of the blues is the *12-bar blues*, which is 12 measures (or bars) in length and mainly uses just three chords. These chords are built on the first (I), fourth (IV), and fifth (V) degrees of the major scale. Measures 1–4 are the one (I) chord, measures 5–6 are the four (IV) chord, and measures 7–8 go back to the one (I) chord. Measures 9–12 consist of the five (V) chord in measure 9, the four (IV) in measure 10, the one (I) chord in measure 11, and the five (V) chord in measure 12; this is also known as the *turnaround*. A turnaround is a short musical statement that points the listener back to the beginning. The chords are all usually dominant seventh chords unless the key is minor.

Although there are other blues forms, the 12-bar form is by far the most common. This book will cover various stylistic techniques within the 12-bar context. Here is an example of a 12-bar blues in E.

The diagram illustrates a 12-bar blues progression in E major. It consists of three staves, each representing a four-measure segment. Above each staff are guitar chord diagrams and their corresponding Roman numerals. The first staff (measures 1-4) shows the I chord (E7) with a 2-1 fingering. The second staff (measures 5-8) shows the IV chord (A7) with a 2-3 fingering for measures 5 and 6, and the I chord (E7) with a 2-1 fingering for measures 7 and 8. The third staff (measures 9-12) shows the V chord (B7) with a 2-1-3-4 fingering for measure 9, the IV chord (A7) with a 2-3 fingering for measure 10, the I chord (E7) with a 2-1 fingering for measure 11, and the V chord (B7) with a 2-1-3-4 fingering for measure 12. The musical staff below each staff contains a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are represented by diagonal slashes, indicating that the specific notes are not specified, only the rhythm and chord changes are shown.

## Blues Rhythm

The blues is frequently performed in a variety of tempos, keys, and rhythms. The feels fall primarily within four categories: 1) The shuffle (or swing), 2) the straight eighth-note feel, 3) the mambo, and 4) the slow blues  $\frac{12}{8}$  feel. Most other blues feels are variations or permutations of these four basic rhythms.

## Blues Phrasing

*Phrasing* is perhaps the most important aspect of blues guitar playing. The scales will tell you which notes to play, while phrasing will determine when and how to play them. Phrasing is the element of music that makes it sound like a given style. Rhythmic and melodic phrasing are essential to playing blues guitar because they outline, or describe, the underlying feel.





## Example 9: Zample Pample

This is a classic must-know blues-rock rhythm reminiscent of Gary Moore or ZZ Top. It's played in the open position and combines single notes and power chords. Add a slight bend to the fretted single notes. The turnaround at the end is played using descending single notes on the 5th and 6th strings.

♩ = 100 (♩ = ♪<sup>3</sup>)



The first system of musical notation consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a sequence of chords: A5, A5, A5, A5, followed by three measures of a slash indicating a repeat. The TAB staff shows the fretting: 2-2-0, 2-2-0, 2-2-0, 2-2-0, followed by three measures of a slash. There are two '1/2' bend markings over the second and fourth notes of the first four measures, and a '3' (triple) marking over the first and third notes of the first four measures.



The second system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff shows chords: D5, D5, D5, A5, A5, A5, followed by three measures of a slash. The TAB staff shows fretting: 3-2-0, 3-2-0, 3-2-0, 2-2-0, 2-2-0, 2-2-0, followed by three measures of a slash. There are four '1/2' bend markings over the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth notes of the first six measures, and '3' (triple) markings over the first and third notes of the first six measures.



The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. The treble staff shows chords: E5, D5, A5, E, A5, followed by a double bar line and a final A5 chord. The TAB staff shows fretting: 2-2-0, 2-2-0, 2-2-0, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, followed by a double bar line and 2-2-0. There are four '1/2' bend markings over the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth notes of the first four measures, and '3' (triple) markings over the first and third notes of the first four measures. The final measure has a '2' marking over the second string.

### Ways to Make This Example Sound Great

- Play with a nasty distortion
- Add a slight bend to each of the fretted single notes
- Play using all downstrokes
- Keep the tempo of the rhythm steady and even
- Have the bass player double the rhythm if you are playing in a band

## Introduction to Blues Lead Guitar

In Section One, we covered some of the most popular blues rhythm styles, now let's learn how to solo over those styles. Developing your own lead guitar voice is an exciting endeavor for all blues guitarists. You'll gain many insights from learning to play transcribed solos and then applying those concepts and techniques to create your own blues solos.

Section Two is highlighted by 18 full-length solos in the styles of blues greats such as Stevie Ray Vaughan, Albert Collins, Eric Clapton, B. B. King, Jimi Hendrix, and Albert King. These solos are presented in various feels, tempos, and keys, and are written in both TAB and standard music notation. You'll be playing over some of the most popular blues rhythm styles, including:

- Medium blues shuffle (in the style of Stevie Ray Vaughan)
- Straight eighth blues-rock (in the style of Chuck Berry)
- Blues-rock shuffle (in the style of Eric Clapton)
- Uptown/jump blues (in the style of B. B. King)
- Slow blues (in the style of Jimi Hendrix)
- Mambo blues (in the style of Albert King)

Section Two begins with a handy reference guide, or refresher, for basic blues lead guitar techniques like bending, slides, pull-offs, hammer-ons, vibrato, trills, the blues rake, and double stops. Though some of this was covered in Section One, we'll examine it here from a lead guitar perspective. Additionally, all the scale patterns necessary to play blues lead guitar are included: the minor pentatonic, major pentatonic, and blues scale. The rest of the section covers individual blues licks and phrases as well as full-length solos in the styles of some of the world's greatest blues guitarists. The ideas and concepts presented in the solos and licks will give you a plethora of ideas to create your own solos. Plus, every solo is performed and broken down on the companion video.



SOLO 3



♩ = 100 (♩ = ♪<sup>3</sup> ♪)

E7



Musical notation for the first system, including a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature, a key signature of one flat, and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature includes fret numbers (3, 4, 2, 0, 1, 2, 3) and techniques such as triplets, vibrato (V), and bends (1/2).

A7



Musical notation for the second system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature includes fret numbers (3, 4, 2, 0, 1, 2, 3) and techniques such as triplets, vibrato (V), and bends (1/2).

E7



B7



Musical notation for the third system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature includes fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 4, 2, 0, 3, 4, 2, 0, 2) and techniques such as triplets, vibrato (V), and bends (1/2).

A7



E7



B7



Musical notation for the fourth system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature includes fret numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 2, 0, 3, 0, 2) and techniques such as triplets, vibrato (V), and bends (1/2).