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Note: Any codas (⊕) that appear will be played only once on the recording at the end of the last recorded chorus.

PLAY-A-LONG CD INFORMATION:

STEREO SEPARATION: RIGHT CHANNEL = Piano, Drums; LEFT CHANNEL = Bass, Drums
Tuning Notes: Concert Bb & A (A=440)

PERSONNEL ON PLAY-A-LONG RECORDING:

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Published by
JAMEY AEBERSOLD JAZZ, INC.
P.O. Box 1244
New Albany, IN 47151-1244
www.jazzbooks.com



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Book only: \$4.95 U.S.

INTRODUCTION

This play-a-long contains MINOR BLUES in all twelve keys. Songs in minor keys have traditionally been favorites of jazz musicians. The blues has been around since the inception of jazz and to put the two together to form "minor blues" was a natural marriage. It's helpful to think of the blues progression as being three 4-bar phrases; A beginning, a middle, and an end. Some feel it is easier to think of melodies in minor keys than in major. You may want to try and compose your completely new melodies to these background tracks or transpose one of my melodies to a different key (different recorded background).

I wrote most of these melodies while in an American Airlines airplane at 35,000 feet up in the air going 500 miles an hour on my way back from Sao Paulo, Brasil in the Spring of 1993. I would listen to a little of the recorded track on my cassette recorder and start singing along with it to myself. When I found an idea I liked, (sometimes it would be the first idea), I would write the notes and chords in my music book. I would then visualize the keyboard (the black and white notes) in my mind while I wrote the notes. With practice, it's a lot easier than you might think.

The final track doesn't have a melody. It is a review of all the 12 keys (one chorus per key) and ascends each chorus by half-steps (chromatically).

I've included both the blues scale and the minor pentatonic scale for each song/key in hopes this will help the novice improviser quickly get to the "sound" of the minor blues. These two scales are very similar: both contain the minor 7th chord (root, 3rd, 5th and 7th of the tonic minor scale). They are actually identical except for the #4 which occurs in the blues scale and not in the minor pentatonic. The #4 is the *Blue Note* in the blues scale.

The SOLOS section of each song lists the scales written in whole notes from the root to the ninth note of the scale. The chord tones are the darkened notes (root, 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th). The fourth measure of the solo section lists the altered dominant scale (also called diminished-whole-tone) and I've put a b9 above the last note of the scale to let you know it is the flatted ninth of that scale (even though the chord/scale symbol has a +9). When you write or play a scale or chord from the root to the ninth the b9 comes before the +9. The diminished-whole-tone scale has both a b9 and a +9. See the Scale Syllabus in this book and look at the page called Dominant Seventh Tree of Scale Choices for other scale sounds that will work.

The half-diminished scale which appears in the ninth measure has an added note in parenthesis (). That note is what we call the sharp two (raised second note of the scale). There are two half-diminished scales (see Scale Syllabus). One uses as its second tone a note ½ step above the root and the other scale (half-dim. #2) uses as its second tone the note which is a whole step (two half-steps) above the root. This may seem a little complex but it's really not. The rule seems to be: "If you want to emphasize the second note (also called the 9th) of a half-dim. scale, (for instance a held note or the top note of a phrase or chord), play the tone which is a whole-step above the root (called the #2). If you are just running a diatonic, scale-wise passage either note will work." You'll have to experiment with using both the regular 2nd and the raised 2nd (#2) to get the feel of how they sound in the context of the minor blues.

In measures 4, 10 and 12 there appear dominant 7th chord/scales. In each case they resolve up a perfect fourth to the next chord/scale. Whenever a dominant 7th resolves naturally (up a perfect fourth interval) you can embellish or substitute other scales during that measure. The page called Dominant Seventh Tree of Scale Choices outlines all the other scales that jazz players have substituted throughout the years. I recommend playing these measures as I have them listed on the pages first. Then, as you become familiar with the sound and feel of the diminished-whole-tone scale try a different scale such as the diminished scale or the whole-tone scale. It usually takes several weeks of playing and improvising with them before you will feel comfortable.

What you are doing is adding to your list of available choices. If you listen to jazz recordings, you will eventually HEAR these substitute dominants EVERYWHERE. Believe me, they are there and have been there for decades. Your ears (and mind) just didn't know what it was hearing.

The last four measures contain what we call a Two-Five-One (ii-V7-i) in a minor key....a half-dim. scale moving to an altered dominant scale which then moves on to the tonic minor chord/scale. Some people like to blanket these measures with one scale - the tonic harmonic minor scale. For instance: in the tonic key of C minor blues you could play the C Harmonic Minor scale over the last four bars. This is something you can experiment with. The scale in the key of C minor is: C D Eb F G Ab B C.

2. C# Minor Blues South Of The Border

PLAY 18 CHORUSES (♩) = 186

LATIN

C#- C#- C#-
Play Harmony On Repeat
(Pickups)
F#- C#-
D#Ø Ab7+9 C#-
Time Only

C# Blues Scale

C# Blues Scale

SOLOS

C#- C#7+9 b9
F#- C#-
b9 C#- Ab7+9 b9

6. F Minor Blues Four On The Floor

PLAY 11 CHORUSES (♩) = 96

SHUFFLE

Musical notation for the first three staves of the 'SHUFFLE' section. The first staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and contains a melodic line with two triplet figures, each starting with an F- chord. The second staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with two triplet figures, each starting with a Bb- chord. The third staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a GØ chord followed by a C7+9 chord.

F Blues Sca'

Musical notation for the 'F Blues Sca'' section, showing a short melodic phrase in treble clef.

SOLOS

Musical notation for the 'SOLOS' section, consisting of three staves. The first staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and contains a melodic line with an F- chord, an F7+9 chord, and a b9 chord. The second staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a Bb- chord, an F- chord, and a double bar line with a repeat sign. The third staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with a b9 F- chord, a C7+9 chord, and a b9 chord.