

Blues Part 2 - Soloing over the blues

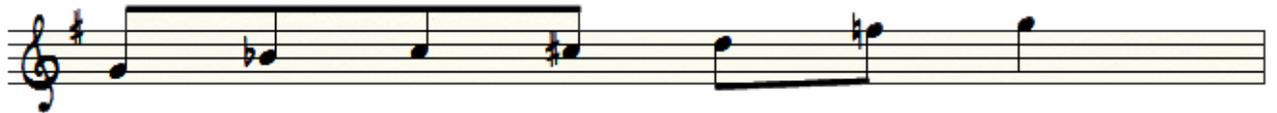
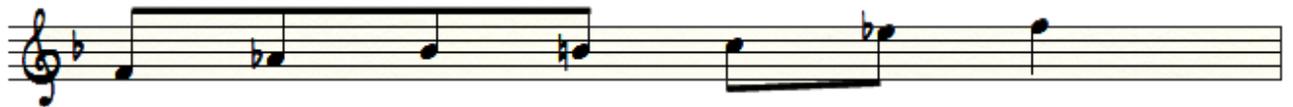
Soloing over the blues can be very simple. There are easy methods that fit very well and make you instantly sound like a professional. The first tool we will use is the blues scale. This is a unique sounding scale that you should listen for when listening to jazz. The blues scale consists of the following degrees: 1, b3, 4, #4, 5, b7, and 1 on top. Below is a C blues scale, (see figure below).



That's it! Using this we can start to play a variety of amazing sounding licks over the blues or jazz standards that don't use a blues form. This blues scale should be created starting on the root of the key that the blues is in. For example, if the blues you're playing is in Bb then you use the Bb blues scale to improvise. There are two different ways to use this scale so it relates to the chords in the blues: 1) is horizontal improvisation and 2) is vertical improvisation.

As you saw last week, there are three different chords in a blues. For a blues in the key of C, we have C7, F7 and G7. A **horizontal** approach to soloing means using one scale that will fit over many chords in a linear fashion so you don't have to think about changing scales. With a horizontal approach you can use the C blues scale to solo over the entire blues, even over the F7 and G7 chords. This will sound great even though not all of the notes from the blues scale are found in those chords!

When thinking **vertically** with harmony, instead of one scale for the entire blues we now use the corresponding blues scale for each chord. This means we will have three different blues scales for the three different chords in a blues. In the key of C we would have our C blues scale, F blues scale, and G blues scale, (see figure below).



The notes from these scales would be used over their relative chord. We will start off practicing with a horizontal approach and then also use the vertical approach once we become comfortable with all of the blues scales.