

Lick Analysis and the Lick Legend

Licks are the musical sentences of the blues language. Part of learning, understanding, and mastering a language involves studying the "basic parts of speech." The following terms and their abbreviations are used to define these specific elements at work in the licks—they are used to diagram the blues sentences, so to speak. The abbreviations are used throughout in lieu of text blurbs to provide a streamlined but thorough approach to lick analysis.

The Lick Legend

Single melody tones are cited and circled in the music notation. These are:

LT=Leading Tone. A leading tone pushes toward an important melodic tone from a half step below. In blues, leading tones typically move to the third, fifth, or tonic note.

LN=Lower Neighbor note. A note either a half step or whole step below a principal tone.

NH=Non-Harmonic tone. These would include the 2nd or 9th, 4th or 11th, and 6th or 13th degrees of the scale.

BN=Blue Note. In blues, these include the flatted 5th/augmented 4th, the minor 3rd in a major or dominant context, and the minor 7th.

Larger structural devices such as specific figures of three notes or greater and turnarounds are cited and bracketed in the notation. These include:

ARP=Arpeggio (preceded by a chord name, such as C ARP)

CA=Chromatic Ascent. Three or more chromatic notes in a row moving higher in pitch.

CD=Chromatic Descent. Three or more chromatic notes in a row moving lower in pitch.

RM=Reverse Mordent. An ornament commonly found in blues. It involves the alternation of a main note with its upper neighbor.

RF=Repeated Figure. These are the basis for the riff concept in blues playing.

IMIT=Imitative procedure at work.

Q: and A:=Question and Answer phrases. The "call and response" procedure is an important aspect of larger blues melody structure.

Every lick is defined by an overall context—either a Basic Scale or a Basic Tonality, depending on its melodic (single notes) or chordal nature. Furthermore, the harmonic situation of each lick is described via the chord symbols I, IV, or V below the TAB staff. These will aid you in using the phrases purposefully against specific chord progression areas in the 12-bar blues form. A suggested tempo feel is provided for each lick: Fast Swing, Moderato, Slow, etc., to further guide you in applying these phrases in your music.

Finally, once you have grasped the essentials of lick analysis, begin your own investigations. Pick your favorite blues improvisations and listen for these devices at work in the music of the greats. Be on the lookout for imitative contours in melodies and riffs, question-and-answer phrases, and other thematic development strategies. This sort of listening and thinking opens the door to a deeper understanding and assimilation of the blues language.

Pre-War Electric Blues

The first batch of licks comes from the swing jazz and jump blues era of the late 1930s and early 1940s. In this period there was a much closer relationship between jazz and blues. Horn-driven big bands were the popular medium of the time and predominately used acoustic guitarists to provide a strictly accompanimental, rhythm guitar role—that is, until Charlie Christian appeared on the scene. Christian played innovative melody lines on the newly-marketed electric-Spanish (ES) guitar, a hollowbodied Gibson ES-150. His mix of earthy Oklahoma and Texas blues and swinging, sax-inspired phrases marked the formal emergence of the electric guitar in blues, pop, jazz, and later rock music. His work with the Benny Goodman Sextet set the standard for early combos with electric guitars; the electric guitarists who followed in the 1940s were under the spell of Charlie Christian and sought to emulate his sound and style. Many of his licks were heard in the subsequent wave of electric swing and jump blues guitarists operating in the 1940s and 1950s. Christian's licks also influenced blues-based rock 'n' roll players of the 1950s like Scotty Moore and Chuck Berry. You will no doubt notice several commonalities such as extensive use of the sixth degree of the scale (the characteristic dissonance of the swing era), tritone double stops, and a consistent swinging eighth-note feel.

To maintain sonic authenticity, I played these licks on a Gibson ES-175D with heavy-gauge flatwound strings. The neck pickup was used exclusively and the tone control was rolled down slightly (around 7 or 8). The tone of the amp was set for a warm and moderately clean sound with a hint of tube overdrive. Tube amps are a must for this music—solid-state guitar amplification hadn't been invented yet.

1 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian

Fast Swing (♩ = ♩♩)
C

2 Basic Scale: C Minor/C Major

Fast Swing (♩ = ♩♩)
F7 C

3 Basic Scale: C Dorian

Fast Swing (♩ = ♩♩)
C

4 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian

Fast Swing (♩ = ♩)
 C

5 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian

Fast Swing (♩ = ♩)

Post-War Electric Blues

Jump blues exploded after World War II. The west coast, particularly Los Angeles, became a hotbed of activity and attracted many regional players to take part in the development of this first official phase of electric blues. The west coast blues style was urbane and still very closely aligned with the swing jazz music of the 1940s. The leading guitarist of the scene was the highly influential T-Bone Walker, a Texas bluesman who was a cohort of Charlie Christian. After Christian's untimely death in 1941, Walker became the leading guitar voice of the electric guitar. His fluid, elegant blues riffs, soulful string bends, and slurred chord style exerted a strong influence on virtually every subsequent player.

The sound on these licks calls for a hollow-body archtop electric and again was achieved with a Gibson ES-175. Slightly lighter strings, particularly an unwound G string, allow for easier bending which is an important aspect of these phrases. The amp tone is a little grittier and brighter with slight tube overdrive and more sustain.

6 Basic Scale: G Blues

Slow (♩ = ♩♩)
G7

7 Basic Scale: G Blues/G Mixolydian

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)
G7

12 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

① - D ④ - D

② - B ⑤ - G

③ - G ⑥ - D

Fast (♩ = ♩♩)

G7

(dobro)

TAB

I
*Strum with pickhand fingers.

13 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

(elec.) E7

w/ semi-clean tone*

Q: P.M. P.M.-----

E5 G5 A5

TAB

I *bridge pickup (III IV)

E7

BN

E5 G5 A5 E7

A: P.M. P.M.----- P.M.

TAB

(III IV) I

17 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Standard Tuning

Moderately

Chord symbols: E*, E/D, E/C#, E/C, E/B, B

Turnaround

CD

I V

*Chord symbols reflect implied tonality.

18 Basic Tonality: D Dominant

Open D Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - A ⑤ - A
- ③ - F# ⑥ - D

Slowly (♩ = ♩)

Chord symbols: F5, D5, D/C, D/B, D/A, F5, D5, D/C, D/B, D/A, F5, D5

BN

w/ slide

I

19 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Standard Tuning:

Slowly (♩ = ♩)

Chord symbols: E, E/D, E/C#, E/B, E, E/D, E/C#, E/B, E

BN 1/4

P.M.

I

20 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Fast (♩ = ♩)

Chord symbols: G5, G5/Bb, G5/C

BN

V

I

23 Basic Tonality: D Dominant

Open D Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - A ⑤ - A
- ③ - F# ⑥ - D

Fast

(National Resophonic gtr.)

24 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Moderately

25 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ = D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Slowly

26 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Slowly

(dobro) G

G ARP w/ slide BN BN

TAB: 0 0 0 4 0 2 4 0 2 3 0 0 2 3 0 0 2 3

I

27 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Moderately

(dobro) G7

w/ slide let ring BN IMIT

TAB: 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 2 3 0 3 3 3 3 2 2 3 0 0 0

I

28 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Moderately

(dobro) C7

w/ slide Gm ARP BN BN

TAB: 0 3 0 5 5 5 5 5 3 0 2 3 0 2 3 0 12 12 11 12 12 0

IV I

29 Basic Tonality: G Dominant

Open G Tuning:

- ① - D ④ - D
- ② - B ⑤ - G
- ③ - G ⑥ - D

Moderately

(dobro)

w/ slide G ARP IMIT IMIT BN BN

TAB: 0 0 4 0 7 0 4 0 7 0 4 0 5 5 5 5 5 5 3 0 2 3 0 2 3 0 0 0

V IV I

30 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Standard Tuning
 Slowly (♩ = ♩♩) (B7)

(elec.) E7

w/ pick & fingers

BN BN RM BN

1/4- 1/4- P.M.

Turnaround

CD

TAB

0 0 0 | 0 2 0 2 1 0 3 0 1 0 3 3 | 0 4 4 3 3 2 2 0 1 0 | 5 5 4 4 3 3 2

(V)

31 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Slowly (♩ = ♩♩)

(elec.) B7

w/ pick & fingers

BN BN BN

1/4 let ring

Turnaround

E CA B7

TAB

2 4 3 3 4 2 0 2 0 1 0 3 | 0 0 0 0 | 1 2 3 4 | 5 0 1 2 | 2 0 0 1

V I V

32 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

(elec.) E7

w/ fingers & amp tremolo

BN BN BN BN

TAB

3 5 4 3 | 5 4 2 0 2 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

I

*Palm-mute all notes on 6th string.

Classic Electric Blues from the Kings

Memphis Blues

The leading exponents of the Memphis blues category are B.B. King and Albert King. Though their music is truly universal today, they both were depictive of their regional context in the early days of their careers. Related by spirit rather than blood, both Kings were tremendous innovators of electric blues guitar. Their licks remain as the common language of the blues guitar solo style.

B.B. King got his start in the early 1950s as the "Beale Street Blues Boy," but rapidly became a national figure with an approach too broad to be pigeonholed by a particular geographic location. His style was influenced initially by T-Bone Walker, Charlie Christian, and the Delta country blues. By the 1960s, King was himself an influence on the next generation of guitarists such as Eric Clapton, Mike Bloomfield, Peter Green, Jimmy Page, Johnny Winter, and many others. He took the art of string bending to new heights—beyond the pioneering of T-Bone Walker—and refined the art of finger vibrato. He also expanded the sound of certain licks with his patented use of a major pentatonic shape known as "The B.B. Box." Listen for those elements in these licks.

B.B. King is closely identified with the Gibson ES-300 series of thinline semi-hollow electric guitars (especially the ES-355) and combo amps, often pushed to a smooth, sustaining overdrive. These licks were played on a Gibson ES-335 and a variety of tube amps.

33 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian

Moderatelyly (♩ = ♩♩)

LT C ARP BN NH BN CD LT C7 arp
w/ semi-clean tone

T
A
B

34 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

NH LT NH BN LT

w/ semi-dist. tone

T
A
B

39 Basic Scale: B Minor/Major Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

TAB: 8 6 6 9 6 8 6 6 9 6 6 8 9 8 9 8 6 6 8 6 6 7

V IV I

40 Basic Scale: C Minor/Major Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

TAB: 14 13 15 15 13 15 16 13 15 14 13 15 13 14 13 15 15 13

I The B.B. Box

41 Basic Scale: C Minor Pentatonic

Slowly (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

TAB: 13 11 13 13 (13) 11 13 x x 11 13 13 8 8 9 10 10 8 8 10 10

I V

42 Basic Scale: G Mixolydian/G Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

TAB: 3 5 3 6 3 5 5 3 5 8 6 7 8 8 6 8 6

I

43 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian/C Minor Pentatonic

Slowly

w/ semi-clean tone

TAB

I IV I

44 Basic Scale: G Mixolydian

Moderately

LT G7 ARP

LT C7 ARP

LT G7 ARP BN BN LT G ARP

w/ semi-clean tone

IMIT

TAB

I IV I

45 Basic Scale: C Minor Pentatonic

Slowly

NH BN

w/ semi-clean tone

loco

Cm6 ARP

TAB

I IV

Albert King is another colossal figure in electric blues guitar. He came to the forefront of the scene in the mid 1960s with a series of funk-oriented releases on the Stax label. Backed by a sterling studio band, he took the blues guitar world by storm with his taut rhythmic licks and extreme string bends. King picked with his fingers and attacked his strings percussively, often snapping them against the fingerboard. He also exploited a signature position cited in these licks as "The Albert Box." King had a profound impact on Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Elvin Bishop, and countless other players in rock and blues.

Albert King favored a late 1950s Gibson Flying V during his classic period. These licks were played with fingerplucking technique on a similar Korina 1958 Gibson Flying V and a Soldano amplifier with a Marshall 4x12 cabinet.

46 Basic Scale: D Minor Pentatonic

Moderately

D7

8va

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

BN

full 1/2 full 1/2 1/2

BN

Dm ARP

1/4

T
A
B

15 13 15 15 15 13 15 15 13 13 15 13 15 14 15 13

I The Albert Box

47 Basic Scale: A Minor Pentatonic

Moderately

A7

w/ fingers

Am ARP

RM

1/4

1 1/2

T
A
B

9 8 8 10 8 9 9 7 5 7 9 10 (10) 8 10 8 10 (10)

I The Albert Box

48 Basic Scale: B Minor Pentatonic

Moderately

B7

(F#7)

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

BN

Turnaround

BN

Bm ARP

1/4

T
A
B

15 15 12 12 10 7 9 7 9 9 9 (9)

I V

49 Basic Scale: B^b Blues

Slowly

B^b7

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

BN

BN

BN

Bb ARP

1/2

T
A
B

8 8 6 8 6 6 6 6 9 6 (6)

I

50 Basic Scale: C# Minor Pentatonic

Moderately
C#m

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

full

P.M.

C#m ARP

T
A
B

12 9 9 11 9 11 9 11 11 11 9 11 9 11

51 Basic Scale: G Blues

Fast (♩ = ♪♪)

G7

BN

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

full

BN

CD

BN

full

The Albert Box

T
A
B

8 6 8 10 9 8 6 8 8 6 8 8 6 8 6 8

52 Basic Scale: Bb Minor Pentatonic

Slowly

Bb7

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

* full

1 1/2

Bbm ARP

full

T
A
B

11 11 11 9 11 11 9 11 9 6 8 6 8 6

I *Snag 2nd str. with 1st str. **Played ahead of the beat.

53 Basic Scale: A Blues

Moderately

E7

D7

A7

w/ semi-clean tone
w/ fingers

full

full

full

1 1/2

full

BN

Am ARP

Am6 ARP

T
A
B

5 8 10 8 8 8 8 1 1/2 8 8 5 5 8 5 7 5

V IV I

54 Basic Scale: C Minor Pentatonic

Moderately

55 Basic Scale: C Blues

Slowly

Texas Blues

The third of the mighty King triumvirate, Freddie King, garnered attention with a spate of catchy blues instrumentals in the early 1960s. His style is steeped in the tradition of country blues guitarists like Lightnin' Hopkins, though he flaunted a powerful, albeit more downhome, single-note style. His technique is singular—King used thumb and fingerpicks to articulate his licks. He is renowned for his memorable turnaround phrases and hooky guitar licks.

Freddie King, like B.B. King, played a thinline semi-hollow Gibson ES-300-style guitar most of the time. He was seen with various models: the ES-335, ES-345, and ES-355, during his lifetime, though he began his landmark recordings on a goldtop Gibson Les Paul model. These licks were played with a Gibson ES-335 and a Soldano amp.

56 Basic Scale: E Major Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = ♪♪)

65 Basic Scale: D Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

IV I V

66 Basic Scale: C Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

IV I

67 Basic Scale: C Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

V IV I (V)

68 Basic Scale: E Major/Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

IV I

72 Basic Scale: C Major Pentatonic

Slowly

IV I V

72 Basic Scale: C Major Pentatonic

Slowly

I

73 Basic Scale: A Minor Pentatonic

Fast (♩ = ♪)

I

74 Basic Scale: C Mixolydian/C Minor Pentatonic

Slowly (♩ = ♪)

I IV I V

75 Basic Scale: D Minor Pentatonic

Moderately

NH NH NH BN 5
 12 10 12 12 full 12 13 10 10 12 10 10 12 10
 V
 G7 grad. bend full BN RM D7 BN
 13 10 13 10 13 10 13 10 12 full 12 full 10 (10) 12 12 (12)
 IV I

76 Basic Scale: C Dominant

Moderately

C7 BN BN BN BN LT
 w/ semi-dist. w/ fingers
 8 8 8 8 8 8
 10 11 10 10 10 11 10 8 10 8 9
 I I

77 Basic Scale: A Dominant

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

E D A Turnaround E7
 let ring CD
 9 9 11 9 9 9 11 9 7 7 9 7 7 7 9 7 8 8 7 5 7 6 5 6 5 X X 5 5
 7 7 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 7 5 X X 7 7
 V IV I V

78 Basic Scale: A Dorian Mode

Moderately (♩ = ♩)

C7

Q: w/ semi-dist. w/ fingers

3

3

3 Cm6 ARP

TAB

8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10

13 10 12 13 12

I

A:

3

3

3 Cm6 ARP

TAB

8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10

13 10 12 10 12

79 Basic Scale: D Major Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = ♩)

D7

w/ semi-clean tone w/ fingers

NH NH RF

BN

3 Dm6 ARP

3 D6 ARP

TAB

8 10 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 12

10 12 10 12 9 12 9

/11/11 7 9 7

I

80 Basic Scale: D Blues

Moderately (♩ = ♩)

A7

BN w/ semi-clean tone w/ fingers

3

BN BN

G7

BN BN BN

1/4

TAB

13 13 10 13 10 13 13 12 10 12 10 12 17 12 12 10 7 10 7 10 8

V **IV**

81 Basic Scale: C Blues

Moderately (♩ = ♩)

F7

w/ semi-clean tone w/ fingers

BN

C7

BN 3 BN 3 BN

BN

1/2

TAB

10 13 10 8 10 10 (10) 8 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 8

IV **I**

82 Basic Scale: D Mixolydian

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

D7

3 BN

w/ semi-clean tone w/ fingers full

BN BN BN LT BN

TAB

12 (12) 10

9 12 10 12 10 12 10

10 11 12 10

83 Basic Scale: G Minor Pentatonic

Moderately

Gm

w/ dist.

full

1/4

TAB

3 5 (5) 3 5 3

3 5 3 5 3 5

3

84 Basic Scale: A Mixolydian/A Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

A7

CA RF BN BN BN BN

w/ dist.

full

1 1/2 1 1/2

TAB

10 8 9 10 9 10 9 10 9

10 10 (10) 8 10

10 10 10 8 9 8 10

British Blues and Early Blues Rock

Traditional blues merged with high-decibel British and American rock in the mid to late 1960s, and has continued in various forms to the present. Some point to Muddy Waters' groundbreaking tour of Great Britain in 1958 as the pivotal moment which sparked the trend. Waters' appearance inspired a host of British blues bands such as the Rolling Stones, the Animals, the Yardbirds, and Ten Years After. This in turn led to further permutations in the form of John Mayall's Blues Breakers, Cream, Fleetwood Mac, and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. The British blues movement also affected American counterparts such as the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Canned Heat, Electric Flag, and others, and became the impetus for the blues-rock fusion of the late 1960s and 1970s. Leading guitar proponents of the movement include Eric Clapton, Peter Green, Jeff Beck, Mick Taylor, Jimi Hendrix, Mike Bloomfield, Johnny Winter, and others.

The licks in the British blues genre and blues-rock are generally modernized elaborations of Chicago, Texas, and Memphis styles reinterpreted and taken to further extremes. You will no doubt recognize many of the musical elements and even distinct melodies as being related to the earlier and contemporaneous American schools. What is new is the greater degree of distortion, usually achieved with high-gain Marshall amplifiers.

I played these licks on a Gibson Les Paul Standard, Gibson ES-335, and Fender Stratocaster plugged into a Soldano SLO-100 or late 1960s Marshall head, and a 1970 Marshall 4x12 cabinet.

85 Basic Scale: E Major Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

A7

BN BN BN BN

w/ dist.

full

IV I

86 Basic Scale: E Minor Pentatonic

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩)

B7

BN BN BN BN

w/ dist.

full

full

Turnaround

LT E ARP BN BN LT E ARP

I V

90 Basic Scale: G Minor Pentatonic

Fast (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)
G7

BN BN BN BN BN BN LT G ARP

w/ dist. 1/2 full 1/2

TAB: 15 18 15 | 17 (17) 15 17 17 15 17 | 15 18 15 17 | 15 17 15 17 17 15 16 17 (17)

I

91 Basic Scale: A Minor Pentatonic

Fast

D7 A7 Turnaround E7

BN BN LT A ARP JBN RM IMIT LT

w/ dist. 1/4 1/4 1/4

TAB: 4 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 6 5 8 5 7 5 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 6 7 5 7 (7)

IV I V

92 Basic Scale: C Minor Pentatonic

Slowly

C7 F7

RF IMIT

w/ dist.

TAB: 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 | 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10

I IV

C7 BN RM 3 BN BN

full full full

TAB: 8 11 8 11 8 8 11 8 11 8 11 8 11 8 10 (10) 8 10 8 10 8 (8)

I

93 Basic Scale: E Minor Pentatonic

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① = E^b ④ = D^b
- ② = B^b ⑤ = A^b
- ③ = G^b ⑥ = E^b

Moderately (♩ = ♩)
 E7

The score for the E Minor Pentatonic scale is presented in two systems. The first system starts with a guitar staff showing the scale notes: E^b, B^b, G^b, F^b, D^b, E^b. The tablature below shows the fret numbers: 7-16, 12-14, 12-14, 12-14, 12-14, 12-15, 12-14, 12-15, 12-14, 12-15, 12-14, 12-15, 12-14. Annotations include 'w/ Fuzz Face', 'BN' (bend), 'RF' (release), and 'full' (full bend). The second system continues the scale with notes like G^b, F^b, D^b, E^b, and includes techniques like 'BN RM' (bend and release), 'BN 1 1/2', 'BN 1 3/4', and 'BN wide vib.'. A note at the end is marked with a wavy line and 'Fret out' noise.

94 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Moderately
 E7

The score for E Dominant tonality is presented in two systems. The first system shows a guitar staff with chords and notes, including a trill (tr) on the E^b note. The tablature shows fret numbers: 0, 0, 2, X, 0, 4, 4, 4, 4, 2, 0, 0, 1, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 2, 0. Annotations include 'w/ semi-dist.', 'LT' (left thumb), 'BN' (bend), and 'tr' (trill). The second system repeats the same material, including the trill on E^b.

Postmodern Blues

The postmodern blues guitar era began in the 1980s with the work of Texas blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan. Vaughan blended the licks and riffs of his influences Albert King, Lonnie Mack, Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Guy, B.B. King, and others with his own passionate playing to form a powerful amalgam. Vaughan's success led to a greater acceptance of the blues in pop culture and paved the way for subsequent postmodern guitarists like Robert Cray, Jeff Healey, Robben Ford, Kenny Wayne Sheppard, Gary Moore, Sonny Landreth, Chris Duarte, and Jonny Lang. Vaughan further paid homage to bluesmen like Howlin' Wolf, Elmore James, and Willie Dixon in his improvisations and repertory.

Vaughan tuned his guitar down one half step (à la Jimi Hendrix) and predominately relied on a variety of Fender tube combo amps. His distortion was usually produced with an Ibanez Tube Screamer overdrive pedal. These licks were played on a Fender Stevie Ray Vaughan Signature Stratocaster tuned down one half step. I also used a TS-808 Tube Screamer and a Soldano SLO-100 amp with the "SRV" modification.

95 Basic Tonality: A Dominant

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① = E^b ④ = D^b
- ② = B^b ⑤ = A^b
- ③ = G^b ⑥ = F^b

Moderately

A7

w/ semi-clean tone

1/4

1/4

1/4

1/4

1/4

1/4

RF

1/4

1/4

1/4

A₉ G₉ A₉ A₉ B₉ C₉ C₉ D₉

CA

12 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

12 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

11 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

IV

96 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① = E^b ④ = D^b
- ② = B^b ⑤ = A^b
- ③ = G^b ⑥ = F^b

Moderately (♩ = ♩)

E

w/ semi-dist.

LT

NH

NH

A6

E

IV

97 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① = E[♮] ④ = D[♮]
- ② = B[♭] ⑤ = A[♮]
- ③ = G[♭] ⑥ = E[♮]

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)
E7

98 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① = E[♮] ④ = D[♮]
- ② = B[♭] ⑤ = A[♮]
- ③ = G[♭] ⑥ = E[♮]

Moderately (♩ = $\frac{3}{4}$)

99 Basic Tonality: E Dominant

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① - E^b ④ - D^b
- ② - B^b ⑤ - A^b
- ③ - G^b ⑥ - F^b

Fast
E7

E7

*** 99 [Lick 100] Basic Tonality: C Blues**

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① - E^b ④ - D^b
- ② - B^b ⑤ - A^b
- ③ - G^b ⑥ - E^b

Slowly
Cm

*Lick 100 begins at 0:30 of track 99.

99 [Lick 101] Basic Tonality: G Blues

Tune Down 1/2 Step:

- ① = E^b ④ = D^b
- ② = B^b ⑤ = A^b
- ③ = G^b ⑥ = E^b

Slowly

G7 Turnaround

rake
w/ semi-dist.

NH RM

full let ring

T
A
B

*Lick 101 begins at 1:05 of track 99.

D7

BN CA w/ bar

T
A
B

V