

Swinger Blues

"Put Your Keys in the Bowl"

Adrian Whyte

Standard tuning

♩ = 120

E-Gt

4/4

1

G7 C7/G G7 G7 Amin7 BbDim G/B

T	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	6	7
A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	6	7

5

C7 C7/G G7 G7/B Eb7/Bb

T	9	9	9	9	9	9	3	3	4	4	4	4	7	7	6	6
A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	8	8	8	8	8	8	3	3	3	3	3	3	7	7	6	6

9

D7/A Amin7 D7/A G7 G7/B Eb7/Bb Amin7 D7/A

T	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	7	7	6	6	5	5
A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	7	7	6	6	5	5

Swinger Blues

'Put your keys in the Bowl'

I've been looking forward to doing a column on swinging for sometime. Believe it or not, many people still partake in the age old ritual of meeting in groups and having a great time swapping partners. It's a bit of a subculture I guess, and more recently I've taken to attending and watching from my seat, whilst playing guitar. Keys in pocket...

For this months Issue, I'm going to walk you through an old school swing approach to the blues. Don't overthink it, just jump right in!!!

Rather than do separate tracks and exercises this month I've gone for the project approach. The cool thing about this is that it will provide a whole new progression for jamming a blues with your friends or various partners. The first thing you need to get a grasp of is how to keep that 5th string muted. It takes a bit of getting used to, but all you have to do is use the finger that is holding the note on the 6th string to 'lean' on and deaden the 5th string. Kinda like when you first learn a D major chord and you keep killing the 1st string!

Secondly, pay attention to the overall feel of the strumming - all downstrokes, and you need to squeeze your fretting hand as you strum to create the pulse. This is what really gets things swinging!

You can also catch the strings on the way up as you relax your hand to create an off beat syncopation, particular on the chord changes.

The next question you may have, is 'Where do all these chord variations and chords outside the blues structure come from?'

Maybe you didn't ask that question, but I'm going to answer it anyway...

Firstly, you'll notice we don't always use the root note. We don't have to.. the first bar establishes the key, so our brain recognises the relationship that certain notes from the IV chord (C7) and the V chord hold harmonically. In english, you can hear the IV and V chords by other defining tones as opposed to the root. Still not very english hey?

The C7 and D7 slash chords (not guns and roses Slash, although I'm sure he swings) are taken from a good old C7 style chord and knocked into this shape with the fifth in the bass - C7/G and D7/A respectively.

Bar 4, we really get some movement here. I grappled with theoretical understanding of this, and there are heaps of things going on.. but it just sounds good!!! It's best to think of it as a walking bass line, with a few extra notes.

If you haven't seen a Diminished chord and don't know what they are about - they are all about joining chords together and creating tension. You'll see they are always a bunch of notes very close to the next chord and they seem to fall in to the next chord. You can artificially create this feel by just finding neighbouring tones to any given chord and having a bash on the way in to the desired next chord. That's some backyard jazz theorem right there!!! You'll see how I've done this in bars 8 and 9 shortly.

In bars 4 - 8, you'll see a variation of C7 that is the root version, the staple seven chord for jazz guitarists. Bar 8 sets up the D7, but take note again of the G/B. Just a G chord, rearranged a little. You also would have seen this in bar 4. Briefly look ahead to bar 9 - see that shape? All we do at the end of bar 8 is play the chord one half step up, then fall backwards into the D7/A. Tension, release!

Bar 10, we do a little II - V - I... don't get it? Don't worry, think of the Amin7 as effectively playing a D chord with a little sus 4. Keith Richards does it all the time. Doubt he swings though...

The end is a slight twist on a classic swing turnaround using all the ideas mentioned above. In some ways this stuff is very complicated, but if you don't over think it and you expose yourself to the style, you'll soon find that you get quite comfortable with

the ideas and you'll start to execute them of your own accord when experimenting with chord progressions.

I take no responsibility for any misinterpretations during this column. The term 'Swing' adheres to a style of music made popular in the early 20th century.