

ANGULAR MAJOR BLUES

HAPPY BLUES AND OUT OF THE BOX!

STANDARD TUNING

$\text{♩} = 120$

Ex 1 G

E-GT

mf

T
A
B

3-5-7 5-7 5-7-9 7-9 8-10-12 10-12-15 15-12-10 12-10-8 9-7 9-7-5 7-5 7-5-3

Ex 2 C

3-5-7 5-7 5-7-9 8-10 8-10-12-15-17-20 20-17-15-12-10-8 10-8 9-7-5 7-5 7-5-3

Ex 3

(C) (D) (G)

3-5-7 5-5 7-5 7-7-5-7 5 5-7-9 7 7-9-11 10 10-10 12-12 10-12 15

Ex 4

(C) (D) (G)

15-12-10 12-10 12-10 8 9-7 5-5 7-9 7-7 9-7-5 8 3

AG 111

Blues and Beyond

Adrian Whyte

Angular Major Blues

Sweet and out of the box!

If you happen to be a regular reader of this column you've probably caught on to the fact that I'm generally trying to introduce topics a little less obvious than Stevie Ray Vaughn licks. Today I thought, 'hmmm, maybe I should just rip out some more cool blues licks..'. That's not what I've done at all, actually today I want to depart from minor pentatonics, boxed shapes and blues scales and introduce you to a cool way to use major pentatonic over our good old three chord structure.

All licks are recorded (loosely) at 110bpm.

Ex 1

Think about that riff from the song 'My Girl' and you've already got the idea. This is a G major pentatonic scale played up the neck. I like this style of playing because it 'trims the fat' so to speak- running up and down this scale, you'll always have a pretty good idea where the notes you want are. When you use box shapes, shifting position can feel like starting again. This scale can make fairly inexperienced players look quite competent and that's because with little effort, one can feel confident with these shapes. Utilise slides in the lower part of the scale to make it sound a little soul, or flat pick and use rapid position shifts to sound more country. I'm not going to micromanage your fingers this month, see what you come up with!

Ex 2

If we were playing a contemporary blues progression or a country style 12 bar, we would be working with the chords G, C and D. Well ya know, in the key of G anyway. Again, these are our 'one', 'four' and 'five' chords. If you're still confused - G, A, B, C, D. Count them starting

with G as one and you'll understand! So I want to illustrate how from the C note and on the C chord, we can play a C major pentatonic scale. The end of this run is tricky so try playing up to the tenth fret and then 'hop' your first finger to the 12th, use your third on the 15th and then hop again to the 17 with your first before completing the upper root note with your 3rd finger on the 20th. If you want to. You do what YOU like mate! Practice this whole scale up two frets and you've got the D chord covered (sorry, only so much space!!!)

Ex 3

Now we take one bar of each chord that we would stretch out for a blues and apply a snippet of ideas from each matching scale. So over a G chord we are playing the scale from exercise 1, obviously adding some rhythm and a cheeky double stop before working from a chunk of the C major pentatonic scale. Take note of the 3rd bar of the exercise where I shift what you've learnt in exercise 2 up two frets. For bar 4, I start to get trickier by adding more double stops

but with a sweeter interval. Slide your first finger from 10 to 12 on the second string and now you can reach the 15th with your pinky or third. Or 5th finger if you have a mutant extra finger.

Ex 4

Now I step up the pace a little, moving in a sequential descending pattern and getting very blue grass on your.. arse. Arse. Am I allowed to say that? Getting blue grass on your donkey is surely ok. You have to shift pretty hard in bar two as we navigate the ideas over C. In bar 3 I return to the double stop idea that we use previously at the beginning of exercise 3 before working our way down the scale. I anticipate bar 4 with a B flat before resolving, which is a gesture towards our good friend the G minor pentatonic. That's right, you can use minor pentatonic over major chords with a very tasty effect even amongst a very major based passage.

Summary

In conclusion, learn the scales, try the exercise and next time you're playing over blues, lighten the mood a little would ya? Play some of these sweet sweet major pentatonic ideas and you'll have a great alternative to your favourite minor pentatonic and minor blues licks. Also, if you play up and down the neck like a pro you'll impress lots of girls, or more likely the bloke at the front who's enthusiastically learning guitar, but that's still cool too!