

Blues in E Foundation Studies III – Using the Licks from the E Minor Pentatonic Scale in a Solo

Hopefully, from the material looked at over the last few weeks, you will have a better understanding of the 12 Bar Blues in E chord progression: the chords used in the progression and the order they are played and also the type of licks that are played over the chords in a typical blues solo.

This week we are going to further enhance your ability of playing a solo by learning and analysing an example solo using some of the eight licks from last week's worksheet. You need to learn the solo and then see if you can identify which of the licks have been used.

Solo Using Some of the Licks from the E Minor Pentatonic Scale

Writing a solo using licks is not as easy as it first sounds and is definitely not just a case of randomly choosing licks to play, although sometimes you can be lucky! The best way to approach it is to set off with a lick you like and then think which lick you would like to follow it to make musical sense - it is like telling a musical story or talking to someone. Remember when we played some solos in the lessons at school and you each took your turn and we discussed playing a question and then answer. This is a really good way to think about it at first in order to get some variety, order and space in your solos.

This is one of the most important things to remember - *leave some space*. If you look at the example solo, there are spaces between the licks and this question and answer approach makes it sound more speech like. You will also notice that the spaces in between the licks are of different lengths - on the first two lines they are longer than on the last line. Hopefully soon, I will be able to give you a link to a video where I demonstrate each lick and the solo, but for now practise playing the solo with your own rhythmic interpretation.

Look at the solo and see if you identify which licks have been used and in what order. Once you have done this, see if there are any other things you can spot in the solo, e.g. Have any licks been repeated and if so how and where? Once you have done that:

- Learn the solo until you can play all the way through it.
- Write your own solo using some of your own licks (Numbers 9 – 14) that you wrote out last week. Remember to leave some space – question and answer.
- Learn to play right the way through your own solo.

All of the material covered in the last few weeks is demonstrated by myself on three video lessons which can be accessed using the following links:

Blues in E Foundation Studies I – <https://vimeo.com/415140192/d8e9da3266>

Blues in E Foundation Studies II – <https://vimeo.com/410646310/56ad464d38>

Blues in E Foundation Studies III – <https://vimeo.com/415141588/d029a7e6b0>

Review the material from last few weeks and practice the solo from this lesson using the video lessons as a guide to how the music and rhythms should sound.