Guitar Lesson Material – 30th June 2020

Blues in E Foundation Studies IV – Chords and Scale Combined and Creating a Riff

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, the type of licks that are used in a solo, written your own licks/solo and analysed the example solo from last week. This week we are going to look at playing the chords along with some of the lower notes from the E Minor Pentatonic Scale in what could be classed as a riff.

Chords and Scale Combined in a 12 Bar Blues

As you can see from the worksheet, this piece of music uses the same 12 Bar Blues Progression as we looked at in the first two lessons in this series, however there is a different rhythm used on the chords and they are all joined together with a riff using some of the lower notes from the E Minor Pentatonic Scale.

The rhythm used for the chords and riff on the first two lines is as follows:

C = Chord n = single notes in the riff Played on the beats in bold type (& = upbeat)

E7 / /E7 /

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 2 3 & 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 2 & 3 4

C C n n n n n n n n C C n n n n n n n

The rhythm used for the chords and riff on the last line is as follows:

B7 /A7 /E7 /B7

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 2 & 3 4

C C n n n C C n n n C C n n n n C

Take each line at a time and then join them up – this is easier than it sounds as the rhythmic pattern of the riff just repeats through the piece, as it should. The hard part is being able to play from the chord into the riff – if this part is causing you some issues, slow it down until you can do it and then speed it up gradually. Once you can play through the piece, have a go at writing your own riff.

Creating Riffs from the E Minor Pentatonic Scale

Writing a riff is similar to writing a lick and again is not as easy as it first sounds and is definitely not just a case of randomly choosing notes to play. A riff is a short collection of notes that is repeated throughout certain parts of the song and is usually played on the lower notes of a scale. Good examples of riffs are: 'Smoke on the Water' by Deep Purple, 'Beat It' by Michael Jackson and 'Walk This Way' by Aerosmith.

The best way is to choose between 4 and 8 notes from the E Minor Pentatonic Scale on the bottom three strings and play around with the notes until you come up with a repetitive pattern and rhythm that sounds good to you using just those notes.

All of this material is covered on the following video lesson:

https://vimeo.com/415144433/c8819f2534