





CONTENTS

CD Track #13: Tuning Notes (Bb & A)

Tunes included in this volume are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Bb Blues - Kenny'll Make It</i> | 8. <i>F Blues - A Little Of This?</i> |
| 2. <i>B Blues - Wiggle Waggle</i> | 9. <i>F# Blues - Downtown Carmi</i> |
| 3. <i>C Blues - Now Hear This!</i> | 10. <i>G Blues - The Camel</i> |
| 4. <i>Db Blues - Repetition Blues</i> | 11. <i>Ab Blues - Shuffle Duty</i> |
| 5. <i>D Blues - The Bird</i> | 12. <i>A Blues - Triple-itis</i> |
| 6. <i>Eb Blues - Dr. Jay</i> | 13. <i>Tuning Notes (Bb & A)</i> |
| 7. <i>E Blues - Big Apple</i> | |

THE BLUES	2
Important Beats	2
"Now's The Time" (Charlie Parker transcription)	3
The Blues Scale	4
The Blues Form	4
The II/V7 Progression	5
Singing - The Real You	6
The Jazz Approach to Practicing	6
Thirds and Sevenths	7
Transposing	9
Cassette Players, Turntables, and CD Players	9
Conclusion	10
The Twelve Blues Scales	10
About This Book And Recording	11
Discography	12
 CONCERT KEY MELODIES & CHORDS/SCALES	13
 Bb INSTRUMENT MELODIES & CHORDS/SCALES	25
 Eb INSTRUMENT MELODIES & CHORDS/SCALES	37
 BASS CLEF INSTRUMENT MELODIES & CHORDS/SCALES	49

NOTE: Any codas (⊕) that appear will be played only once on the recording at the end of the last recorded chorus.

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THE BLUES

The Blues sound has traditionally been the element that has attracted our attention when listening to jazz music. That sound, the Blues scale, has seeped into every style of jazz including free form. It may be even more popular in rock. The Blues scale began with the Blues form and is now comfortable in settings such as Modal tunes, Standards, Bossa Novas and Ballads.

The Blues is a musical form that jazz musicians have always embraced because it gives them the opportunity to express emotion and everyday feeling **and** intellectual concepts that are often learned by studying another player's style. Many beginning improvisors use the Blues as a springboard to other jazz forms.

The Blues is 12 bars/measures in length and can be played at any tempo or feel, 3/4, 4/4 or odd meters. It occasionally is stretched to 14, 16 or 24 bars/measures and has been shrunk to less than the usual 12 bars. But the common ground is always the same . . . the **BLUES SCALE**, which is the essence of the Blues.

The traditional Blues has three chords/scales. The blues progressions on this play-a-long are a little more sophisticated because they offer several challenges that are not present in the more traditional version. They also are the ones most often encountered in jazz today.

Jazz musicians have always enjoyed playing the Blues. The challenge of being able to play blues fluently in all keys is one this play-a-long set hopes to make a reality.

Charlie Parker practiced in all twelve keys. Becoming proficient in all keys is a necessary step in the evolution of the **total musician**. Some keys sound bright, some dull. Some are easy to improvise in and others require more concentration and patience. There are no hard keys, just unfamiliar ones. Since I play alto sax, I've found the key of Ab concert, F on the alto, to be one of the most enjoyable keys for me to solo in. Many tenor players like Db concert, Eb on tenor, because it gives them a wide range - from low Bb to high F - 2 1/2 octaves.

I suggest the beginner start with a key that has comfortable fingerings so as to make it easier to make the connection from **mind to fingers**. Remember to mix your practice time with playing "by ear" (not looking at the book) and by reading the actual chord/scale progressions. It's **always** helpful to memorize the chord/scale progression - the sooner the better!

Train your ear to **hear** the roots of each chord as well as when one chord moves to another - called **harmonic motion**. Don't let the music move along harmonically without being aware of **where it is and where it's going**. The Blues is jazz' common denominator. Often it is treated too lightly and by that I mean players solo using only the blues scale or a pentatonic scale. With a little attention you can become proficient using a variety of scale sounds while playing the Blues.

IMPORTANT BEATS

A characteristic of jazz, and good music in general, is the placement of **chord-tones** on the **first** and **third** beats. By playing roots, thirds, fifths and sevenths on beats one and three you automatically allow the phrases to flow with the semblance of order and cohesion we've become accustomed to. Bebop music is particularly mindful of this technique. A study of transcribed solos will show this to be the rule. I highly recommend David Baker's "How To Play Bebop - Volume 1" book.

C BLUES SCALE

3. C BLUES

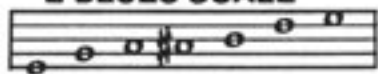
A MELODY

Now Hear This!

B Play 5 Choruses

C Play 3 C

E BLUES SCALE



7. E BLUES

A MELODY

Big Apple

B Play 4 Choruses

C Play