

Getting the Blues

Although the blues may not be as complex a musical genre as jazz, there's still no way to treat the subject comprehensively in one chapter. I'm just going to try to answer a few specific questions:

1. What is a blues scale?
2. What is a major blues scale?
3. What are the most standard 12-bar blues progressions, and what are some variations?
4. How do you choose blues scales over a standard 12-bar blues progression?
5. How can phrasing contribute to an authentic blues sound?
6. How do you choose blues scales over standard chord progressions?
7. What other scales may be used over the blues?

What is a blues scale?

Here's an F blues scale (sometimes called an F minor blues scale):



There's no preferred view of this scale. You can construct it using any of these definitions:

1. a series of intervals: minor 3rd, whole step, half step, half step, minor 3rd, whole step
2. a series of scale degrees: 1 b3 4 #4 5 b7 1 of a major scale.
3. a minor pentatonic scale plus a tritone (#4)

Before you read on, play this scale in a few different keys.

What is a major blues scale?

Here's an F major blues scale:

