

Guitar Lesson 5

Essential guitar chords for Jazz

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Ex. 7

In the exercise below we use the economy chords in the key of G. The 12 bar blues is the form used most in Blues. The I IV V chord progression is the most common progression in Blues.

Be sure to access Ex. 8 after finishing Ex. 7 by clicking on the arrow in the upper left corner.



Ex. 8

In the previous exercises we examined the I IV V chord progression because of its predominance in Blues. In the following exercise we'll study the ii V progression which is the backbone of Jazz, Western Swing, and Rags. In the ii V chord progression the ii is a minor chord and the V is a dominant 7. However, it is very common in jazz to change the ii chord to a dominant 7 also. Therefore, the following example will use dominant 7 chords only. The minor chords will be discussed in another lesson. In traditional harmony the V is a dominant 7 chord and the I is a Major 7. The V7 has a dissonant or unresolved sound that wants to resolve to the I Maj7 which sounds resolved or it sounds like the tune is finished. However, when you change the I chord to a dominant 7 it sounds like a V7 chord that wants to resolve to a I. Therefore, each chord acts as a V7 to the upcoming chord but the upcoming chord becomes the V7 of the next chord. This is known as the Cycle of 5ths chord progression. The following exercise will get you well acquainted with the Cycle of 5ths chord progression.

A7 11fr D7 10fr G7 9fr C7 8fr F7 8fr B^b7 6fr E^b7 6fr A^b7 4fr D^b7 3fr G^b7 2fr B7 E7

Ex. 9

The exercise below uses the ii V progression. The ii remains a m7 chord. Am7 is the ii in the key of G. D7 is a V in the key of G. However, since G is m7 instead of Maj7 we have changed keys. Gm7 becomes a ii chord in the key of F and C7 becomes the V in the key of F. But then F changes to a m7 and becomes a ii in the key of Bb a so the cycle continues. The Cycle of Keys.

A^m7 12fr D7 10fr G^m7 10fr C7 8fr F^m7 8fr B^b7 6fr E^bm7 6fr A^b7 4fr D^bm7 4fr G^b7 2fr B^m7 2fr E7

Ex. 10

The next example is in the key of G using the chords we have learned in a typical jazz progression.

G7 E7 6fr A7 5fr D7 4fr G7 C7 G7 D7 4fr G7

Ex. 11

The next example is in the key of C using the chords we have learned in a typical jazz progression.

C7 A7 5fr D7 4fr G7 C7 F7 C7 G7 C7