
how to play the blues How many want to play the blues?

Posted by Lenny - 2008/06/28 12:30

Just curious how many beginners or more advanced players here play the blues. For me I mainly play blues tunes. When I really get in the groove it is when I play along with a blues song and play my own solos. I've always found it difficult to play rythm along with a song on CD but my Strat sings when it comes to soloing. Lately I've been trying to expand my knowledge of the blues and I've been noticing that some blues players like Albert King have a second guitarist who play rythm and it seems with King anyway that he would play the solo and signature licks throughout the song and not play much rhythm. At least that's how it is transcribed in the Albert King book I have. The rythm guitar is mostly played by a second guitarist. BB King seems to play this way as well. Singing and adding signiature licks throughout the song and not playing chords throughout the song. Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughn always seemed to be playing rhythm and solos while on stage. Simply put some guitarists seem to be constantly doing something with their guitar while others only play certain stand out parts of a song. Is any of this making sense or does it sound like I am out of my mind? It probably goes to the particular artists style, type of music, song, and perhaps ability. When I was younger I wanted to play like Eddie Van Halen and all the other fast players but as I get older (I'm 34 now) it's like I want to put more feeling into each note instead of running up and down the fretboard as fast as I can. Don't get me wrong I still enjoy listening to VH sometimes but it's not what I want to play. I've been practicing some contemporary Clapton tunes lately like the slower blues tunes from Journeyman and they are a good fit for me. I love that Strat sound in a slow blues tune. Am I rambling at this point or is anyone still with me? Anyway, summing up maybe it is the quality not quantity arguement for what appeals to me at this point in my playing and it seems like the blues is perfect for that. Ray

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Posted by Tony Meloche - 2008/06/28 12:30

Anyway, summing up maybe it is the quality not quantity arguement for what appeals to me at this point in my playing and it seems like the blues is perfect for that. Yeah. And while the Strat, as you point out, works great for the blues, any guitar works great for the blues if you can play 'em. Blues is in the guitarist, not the guitar. The Old Guy

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Posted by guitbox - 2008/06/28 12:30

Just curious how many beginners or more advanced players here play the blues. I do, sometimes. Especially like Keb Mo, but that's acoustic blues. Lately I've been trying to expand my knowledge of the blues and I've been noticing that some blues players like Albert King have a second guitarist who play rythm and it seems with King anyway that he would play the solo and signature licks throughout the song and not play much rhythm. At least that's how it is transcribed in the Albert King book I have. The rythm guitar is mostly played by a second guitarist. Lots of guys and gals do it that way. BB King seems to play this way as well. Singing and adding signiature licks throughout the song and not playing chords throughout the song. In B. B.'s case, the answer is simple. By his own admission, he doesn't know chords! He played melody-line blues from the start. Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughn always seemed to be playing rhythm and solos while on stage. Simply put some guitarists seem to be constantly doing something with their guitar while others only play certain stand out parts of a song. Is any of this making sense or does it sound like I am out of my mind? The guys playing constantly generally do it for one of two reasons: 1) They like to play as much as possible of both rhythm and lead (though this frequently means fiddling with switches and knobs on the guitar during a song). 2) They feel like a dork holding a guitar, but not playing every second. It probably goes to the particular artists style, type of music, song, and perhaps ability. Ya got it - one or a combination of all those things. When I was younger I wanted to play like Eddie Van Halen and all the other fast players but as I get older (I'm 34 now) it's like I want to put more feeling into each note instead of running up and down the fretboard as fast as I can. Don't get me wrong I still enjoy listening to VH sometimes but it's not what I want to play. I've been practicing some contemporary Clapton tunes lately like the slower blues tunes from Journeyman and they are a good fit for me. I love that Strat sound in a slow blues tune. Am I rambling at this point or is anyone still with me? You're making perfect sense to me! Anyway, summing up maybe it is the quality not quantity arguement for what appeals to me at this point in my playing and it seems like the blues is perfect for that. Yeah. And while the Strat, as you point out, works great for the blues, any guitar works great for the blues if you can play 'em. Blues is in the guitarist, not the guitar. The Old Guy

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Posted by Mike C. - 2008/06/28 12:30

I'm actually more of a jazz-influenced blues player. I hate playing with people who only play blues because it's all they can play. That usually translates to I'm too lazy to learn anything complex. HOWEVER, that said, the good blues players are exactly that: good players. Tony mentioned Keb Mo. He's a great player who chooses to research the blues and play it well, as well as very authentically. Corey Harris is another guy like that. I love B.B. King and Albert King, although they don't play chords to speak of. B.B. can play some chords but he really just doesn't get into that. He is more of a blues singer, in part. His style is to play with a big band and that's just what he's used to doing. I think it's very important to learn the whole bag. You should learn to be a great rhythm player as well as a soloist. I actually enjoy playing rhythm, and try to make sure that my rhythm playing has a lot of character as well as my soloing. Where to punch in chords, what the dynamics should be for those chords, when to lay out, when to add different inversions of the chords, when to play higher and when to play lower, etc. There is a whole type of art in being a good accompanist, and if you can do that well and then switch to being a great soloist, you're a goldmine. Blues can be pretty fast, as well. I think it's a lot more musical than the thrash '80's metal that pervades the guitarist image to most people. Playing blues is about listening, dynamics, listening, improvisation, listening, working with the rhythmic section, listening, and playing with soul and feeling. Oh, and it's about listening, too. There's a lot of variety in the blues. Listen to Larry Carlton or Robben Ford play blues. They both can and do certainly play authentic traditional blues, but they can also step it up a notch and add more complex changes into what they play, not to mention amazing rhythms and dynamics. Both Larry and Robben have great lesson videos that address all of this stuff. Check out Larry Carlton's Last Nite CD for a taste of his blues playing, in a slow blues, a fast shuffle, a more jazzy 3/4 time blues, etc. He's also got a new CD out that's supposed to be pretty good for blues. Robben Ford has a Blues Collection CD that is definitely all that. What did you want to discuss about blues? Oh, and don't let LaRoc hear you talking about quality over quantity. He'll be all over you like flies around a, um, construction worker... ;-)

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Posted by G5832 - 2008/06/28 12:30

Anyway, summing up maybe it is the quality not quantity argument for what appeals to me at this point in my playing and it seems like the blues is perfect for that. Ray I agree with you Ray. Stevie Ray Vaughan spoke of musicians trying to emulate sounds they heard in every day life. And Hendrix once remarked that he tried to replicate the fast-sounding rush of the wind when as a paratrooper he stood in the door of a C-130. Music is art, and every note you play says something. Randy remove nospam to reply

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Posted by DirkH - 2008/06/28 12:30

Just curious how many beginners or more advanced players here play the blues. If you're interested in Blues check out my Blueslesson Guitar Homepage and my Bluesrock Guitar Homepage with the biggest Blues tab collection! Dirk SouthernRock Guitar Homepage <http://southernrock.de.vu/> BluesRock Guitar Homepage <http://bluesrock.de.vu> Online Blueslesson Homepage <http://blueslessons.de.vu>

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Posted by Chess Player - 2008/06/28 12:30

Hendrix had been a paratrooper at one time?? It's gonna take me a while to get my head around that one! But it does explain the line: Pardon me, while I kiss the sky ! Yes indeed he was in the military in the early 60's as a paratrooper. He received a medical discharge after breaking his ankle if memory serves me correctly. I swear to you I've got a live recording of Jimi saying Excuse me while I kiss that guy !!! Kinda makes ya wonder huh? LOL I have it on the Voodoo Collection CD's that came out a few years ago. Anybody else familiar with this? Brian

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Posted by Daniel - 2008/06/28 12:30

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Posted by Charlie - 2008/06/28 12:30

I think kiss this guy or kiss the guy is one of those misheard lyrics right? I seem to recall Jimi hasd become aware of that and may have purposely performed it that way as a parody.... The published lyrics are scuze me while I kiss the sky

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Posted by Pt - 2008/06/28 12:30

Hendrix had been a paratrooper at one time?? It's gonna take me a while to get my head around that one! But it does explain the line: Pardon me, while I kiss the sky ! The Old Guy I thought he was singing...Scuze me while I kiss this guy! Pt - Hide quoted text -- Show quoted text -

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Posted by Pt - 2008/06/28 12:30

I think kiss this guy or kiss the guy is one of those misheard lyrics right? I seem to recall Jimi hasd become aware of that and may have purposely performed it that way as a parody.... The published lyrics are scuze me while I kiss the sky Another one from CCR is Bad Moon Rising.. There's a bathroom on the right. Pt

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Posted by Mike C. - 2008/06/28 12:30

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Posted by Pt - 2008/06/28 12:30

Well, how about the Manfred Mann tune, Blinded By The Light (actually written by Springsteen) that talks about wrapped up like a douche, another runner in the night... I always thought that those were the lyrics he was singing. It should be...Revved up Like a Duece....Which is a 1932 Ford hotrod. Pt

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Posted by Mike C. - 2008/06/28 12:30

to play lower, etc. There is a whole type of art in being a good accompanist, and if you can do that well and then switch to being a great soloist, you're a goldmine. I agree. I think that trying to play both rhythm and lead is the most challenging thing - that it, playing enough of the chords to keep the rhythm going while throwing in enough lead to make it shine.

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Posted by Stephen Calder - 2008/06/28 12:30

Just curious how many beginners or more advanced players here play the blues. For me I mainly play blues tunes. When I really get in the groove it is when I play along with a blues song and play my own solos. I've always found it difficult to play rhythm along with a song on CD but my Strat sings when it comes to soloing. Lately I've been trying to expand my knowledge of the blues and I've been noticing that some blues players like Albert King have a second guitarist who play rhythm and it seems with King anyway that he would play the solo and signature licks throughout the song and not play much rhythm. At least that's how it is transcribed in the Albert King book I have. The rhythm guitar is mostly played by a second guitarist. BB King seems to play this way as well. Singing and adding signature licks throughout the song and not playing chords throughout the song. Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughn always seemed to be playing rhythm and solos while on stage. Simply put some guitarists seem to be constantly doing something with their guitar while others only play certain stand out parts of a song. Is any of this making sense or does it sound like I am out of my mind? It probably goes to the particular artists style, type of music, song, and perhaps ability. When I was younger I wanted to play like Eddie Van Halen and all the other fast players but as I get older (I'm 34 now) it's like I want to put more feeling into each note instead of running up and down the fretboard as fast as I can. Don't get me wrong I still enjoy listening to VH sometimes but it's not what I want to play. I've been practicing some contemporary Clapton tunes lately like the slower blues tunes from Journeyman and they are a good fit for me. I love that Strat sound in a slow blues tune. Am I rambling at this point or is anyone still with me? Anyway, summing up maybe it is the quality not quantity argument for what appeals to me at this point in my playing and it seems like the blues is perfect for that. Ray Oh yeah man I love Taj Mahal, he did some great stuff on both acoustic and electric (both Ry Cooder and Jesse Edwin Davis played on his awesome first album, recently reissued). Tracks like Leavin' Trunk and Corinna Blues Ain't Nothin' and The Hoochie Coochie Coo just knock me out. Clapton's From the Cradle album is perfect for playing along with as most of the tracks are straight 12-bar blues progressions or variations on that theme, and Clapton shows just how versatile he is and what variety can be displayed with simple I-IV-V progressions. I'm particular about the kind of blues I listen to and I don't like it too raw or dirty (a little bit is okay). Country Blues (if Bonnie Raitt for example could fit in that category) does it for me. Hot Tuna was awesome, especially the first live album, and especially if you like to hear some blues in minor keys. Also check out early Fleetwood Mac, Fenton Robinson, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, and for two or three vastly unappreciated blues performances by a master of minimalism (doing a lot with a little) listen to Mercury Blues and Sweet Marie from the Steve Miller Band Album Fly Like An Eagle. Stephen Byron Bay, Australia

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Posted by Blues_Axe - 2008/06/28 12:30

On Sat, 24 Jan 2004 05:11:03 GMT, Blues Axe twanged: Well, I play blues guitar.....drop in an occasional rock or country tune too. But I thought the point of music was to enjoy it....not criticize how others do or don't play what we

play.....

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Posted by Gyzmo - 2008/06/28 12:30

I'm actually more of a jazz-influenced blues player. I hate playing with people who only play blues because it's all they can play. That usually translates to I'm too lazy to learn anything complex. Maybe some of us actually like the blues, I can play other stuff but it doesn't talk to me, Steve? You don't have to be Jewish to play the Blues

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Posted by Mike C. - 2008/06/28 12:30

I'm not sure why my google posts didn't make it here, but I'll reiterate: I don't have a problem with blues players. I have problems with people who play blues because they can't play anything other than a I-IV-V. There are certainly great blues players. A lot of people see blues as easy to play, so that is all they play. 9 out of 10 times I hear someone say, I'm primarily a blues player, I find that they can't play, blues or otherwise. That's the player that I get tired of. No groove, no sense of dynamics, no interest in learning more about the music he/she plays, no ears to play with the rest of the band. That's not the average blues player, that's the blues wannabe. Sorry if I had insulted anyone.

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Posted by Mike C. - 2008/06/28 12:30

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Posted by Daniel - 2008/06/28 12:30

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Posted by Pt - 2008/06/28 12:30

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Posted by Mike C. - 2008/06/28 12:30

That's if everyone gets a turn at it. That's not always the case. Additionally, some people are just there to play loud and aren't interested in learning anything or working with the rhythm section. You can be assured that any inexperienced player/singer who gets onstage with me at a blues jam will get appropriate solo time *and* will learn something about playing with others before getting offstage.

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