

Put Some Shape in Your Solos

Many players tell me that when they solo their efforts just sound like they are playing up and down scales, or that they sound too “scaly”. There are many different reasons why this could happen, but in this lesson I will show you how you a cool trick to quickly get rid of the “scaly” sound.

When most people begin guitar they gravitate towards the minor pentatonic scale because it is an easy scale to begin playing with all your favourite rock and blues tunes. However, it does have its drawbacks and sounding too “scaly” is just one of them. When you are using the minor pentatonic scale at the beginning of your career you are normally playing over the changes (chord progression) of a song, meaning that you play one scale over the whole progression. However, advanced players normally play through the changes, changing scale with every chord change, which is a lot more difficult.

The best way to play minor pentatonic solos and sound like you are changing with the chords is to play the root note of the chord at the chord change. For example if you are playing a blues in A, the chords will be A, D, E. So when the chord changes to A start the scale on any A note, when it changes to D, start on any D note, and E, for the E chord. This cool trick will give your listeners the idea that you are more musically mature in the soloing idiom than you most probably are.

If you have been listening closely to any of your favourite players from any style you will hear that this is a favourite trick of many top players. So if the top players use this simple trick, then I think you should as well. After all, the world’s top players don’t always execute difficult ideas.

One thing that you will need to be aware of is what chord you are playing over. This is most probably the most challenging aspect for players new to this facet of the game. It would pay to study the chord changes on paper first, and then begin to listen to the chord changes as you play along. It might take a while, but once you have it you will be able to play better sounding solos by using this technique.

In the following solo “Blues for You” you will see how to use the idea and put some shape into your solos. Even though you are using just the one scale, it sounds like you are changing with the chords. When you know this solo well, then it is time to make up some of your own ideas for solos in your music.

Blues for You

The musical score for "Blues for You" is presented in three systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The first system (measures 1-4) is for an A chord. The second system (measures 5-8) is for D and A chords. The third system (measures 9-12) is for E7, D, A, and E7 chords. The tablature includes fret numbers (5, 7, 8) and techniques like bends and slides.

To hear the music for this lesson visit http://www.guitar.co.nz/free_lesson.php3?id=24

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