



Blues/Rock Introductions

This article has come about because on a gig a while ago I was asked by various musician observers, how could I navigate my way through a gig with bluesman Bullfrog Rata and make it sound like we had rehearsed it, even though we hadn't rehearsed or played together for years? Since then I have been asked that question a lot, so I thought it would make a great lesson for NZM.

The basic rule is that many blues/rock arrangements are not written down in standard music notation, but are instead communicated verbally. There are three introductions that are standard – 'from the top', 'from the five', and 'from the turnaround'. You will also need to know the keys and key signatures along with the 'quick change' and 'slow change'.

the turnaround or the five chord is in the key of Bb or Eb?

The quick change is already written into the arrangement here, it is the change to the A chord in bar number 2. The slow change is where you play the E chord for the first four bars.

You do also need to know all the keys and where to play them on guitar. So getting to know all the bar chord names and where they are on the neck is critical to you're being able to do this. If you are not at the bar chord stage of learning yet, don't worry, as you will still be able to play and understand this lesson, but do come back to it when you know your bar chords really well.

Also make sure you know the key signatures well because if you are playing with a horn

take it from the turnaround with a brisk tempo." Likewise, "This song is in four sharps, with the quick change from the five – very slow tempo."

This is exactly how bandleaders communicate with the quests on stage who have not rehearsed with the band, or in jam sessions where new players to the setting are involved. I must say it does take a bit of confidence to be able to pull this off on stage in front of an audience, but it would be a great idea to try it with your mates at a jam session first.

Although I have written this article in a blues/rock setting, you can expect to come across the same in any genre of music and at any level, beginner, intermediate, or advanced. Make sure you are ready for it.

Looking at the music diagram, 'From the top' means to start the song from bar number one. 'From the five' means beginning the song from the fifth chord in the key in bar number nine. 'From the turnaround' means to begin the song on the turnaround in bar number 11. What happens in other keys, do you know what

player they will call the keys as two flats or four sharps, etc. So you need to know what 'two flats' or 'four sharps' is. If you don't, a little music theory will go a long way to help you become a much better guitar player than you are now.

You should know what to do if a band leader calls out, "This song is in E with a slow change,

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