Lesson 25 – Using The Major And Minor Blues Sounds Together (DVD 7)

In This Lesson: In this lesson we'll learn a tune in the key of G where I'll mix together the major and minor blues sounds so you can see how they work.

As I mentioned before, this is the real "secret sauce" that makes blues really sound authentic.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with using nothing but the minor blues sound for your whole tune. I do it all the time. But I think once you hear what the major sound does you are going to want to use it a lot.

The "rule" is actually ridiculously simple:

Use the major sound over the I chord, and the minor sound over the IV and V chord.

Let's take a look at an example and then we'll walk through it so you can see what I mean.

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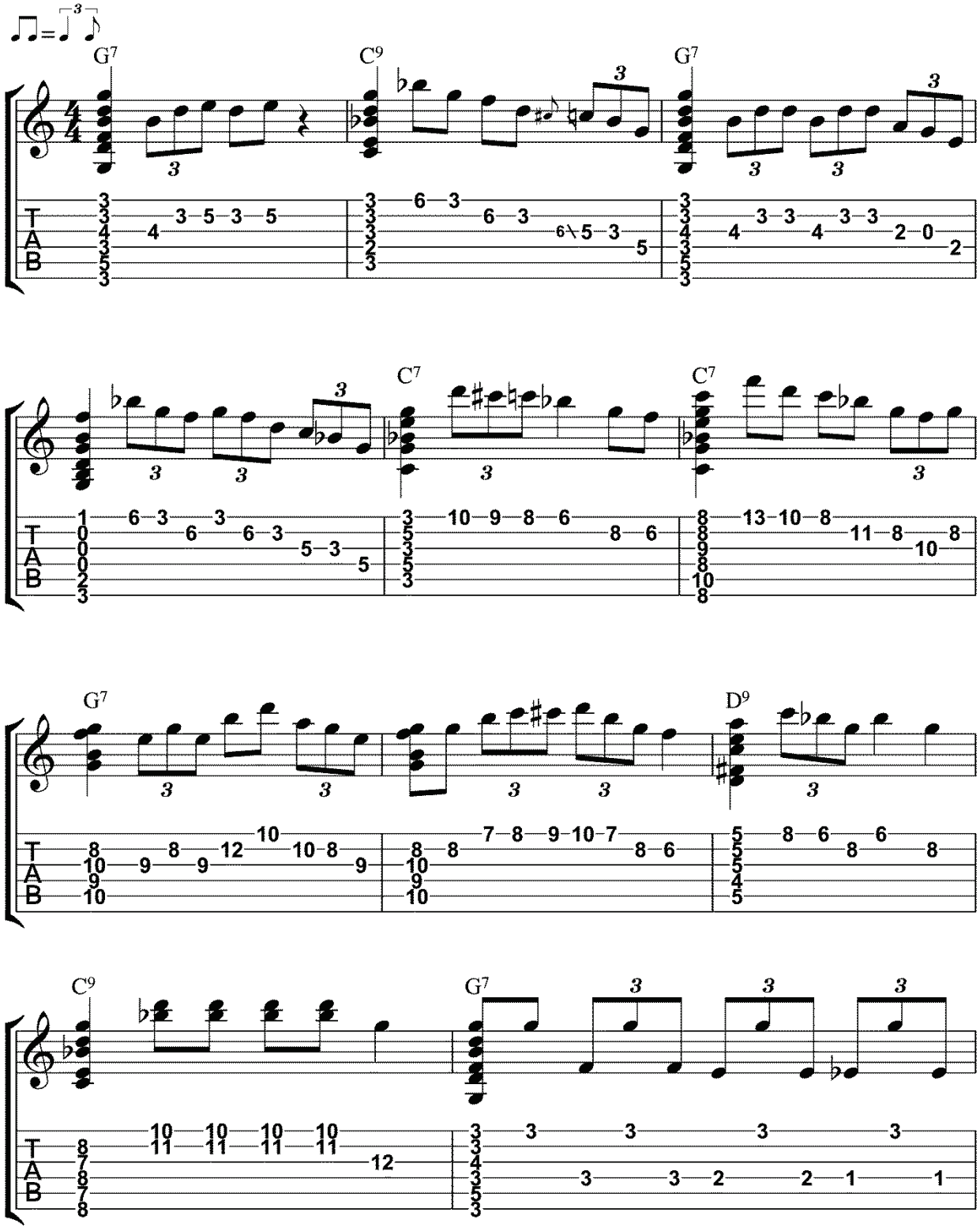
Long Time Coming Blues (CD 2, Tracks 7 and 8)



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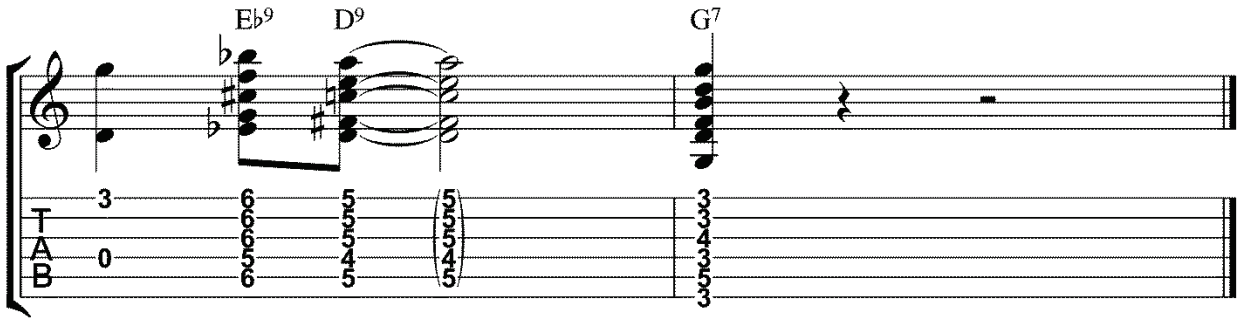

The reason I like to get into stuff like this is because to me the blues is very much a "plug and play" style of music.

We all hear people who sound like they are just making it up as they go along… but in reality those are the guitar players who have learned why certain sounds and phrases sound good in certain situations. And on top of that, they've learned how to mix and match those pieces to create new tunes on the spot.

To me, the blues is like a puzzle where you get to take the individual pieces and create whatever picture you would like to create.

I encourage you to take licks from earlier in the course that are in different keys and swap the out for licks in this last tune, for example.

Now that you know that these licks are all interchangeable, you can create literally millions of combinations!

In fact, just for fun I did the math and if you have 12 licks that you know how to use (1 for each measure,) and you never repeat any of them, you can come up with 479,001,600 different combinations of those 12 licks!

In most of the "how to play blues guitar" courses I've seen in the last 30 years or so, I see a lot of "how to play" certain things… but nothing about why guitar players choose the notes that they choose.

It was a big frustration for me growing up because I always wanted to know the "why" so that I could make up my own songs… even if just for my own enjoyment.

I found that with just this one simple rule about using the major blues sound over the I and the minor blues sound over the IV and V, I was able to explain just about any lick I ever ran across; which meant I could easily add it to my own "bag of tricks" and know how to use it in other situations.

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