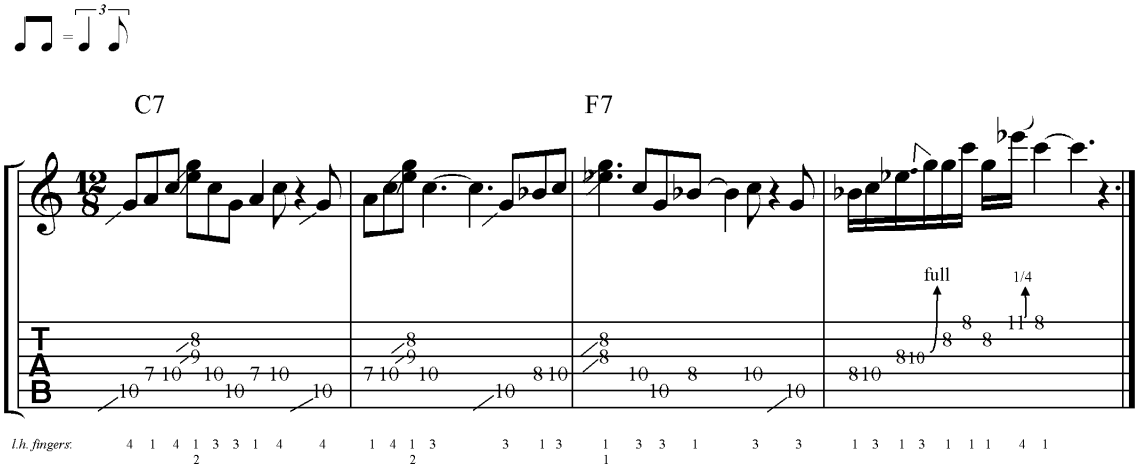
Blues Lead **Riff# - 105**

I-IV Chord Tension-Release Date – 04/14

Though using the same minor pentatonic scale throughout a blues progression is a well proven strategy for soloing, there is another approach one should add to their repertoire. This concept involves using different scales depending whether you are on the I or the IV chord. For example, in a blues progression in the key of "C", the I chord is a C7 and the IV chord is an F7. Instead of playing the same C minor pentatonic scale over both of these we will play a C major pentatonic over the C7 and then a C minor pentatonic over the F7.

The effect that this scale change achieves is that of tension/release. When playing the C major pentatonic scale over the C7 chord we get a "sweet" or "happy" major type sound that is lacking that emotional blues feel that we are used. But, when we move to the IV chord or F7 we switch to the C minor pentatonic scale and can now dig into the more emotional blues notes (flat 3rd & flat 7th) of the C minor pentatonic scale. It is over this chord and using this scale that we create the tension that makes the blues sound like "the blues".

Yet, if overused, tension ceases to be tension if it doesn't have anything to contrast with. So, when we switch back to the C7 chord and play the C major pentatonic scale we get a resolution of that blues tension. Subsequently, when we return to the IV chord or F7 those cool, gritty blues licks will have all the more impact when they are contrasting the feel from the major pentatonic on the C7 or I chord.



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Gear Box of the Day: Pete Townshend of the Who is directly responsible for one of rock and roll's indispensible sonic tools and iconic images - the 100 Watt Marshall Stack. Townshend was looking for a louder amplifier and turned to local Brit, Jim Marshall. Marshall increased the wattage of his prior amps to the nice round, and loud, number of 100. Townshend and Who bassist John Entwistle were the first to have this soon coveted amplifier. To accommodate the increased power the amp cabinets needed to be doubled in size. Finding that these new behemoths were too unwieldy to be transported from gig to gig, Townshend inquired of Marshall if they could be cut in half and made to stack upon each other. And thus was born the Marshall 100 Watt Stack.

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