

Sizzling Turnaround Licks

By Jason Kokoszka

Blues musicians, regardless of experience, are always looking for new ways to keep this time-honored form fresh and interesting. One way to breathe life into your blues is to learn hot, new turnaround licks. In this issue, you'll be given a series of turnaround licks that can be easily adapted for use as intros and endings for your favorite blues tunes. For more information on blues turnarounds, check out the Theory Corner for an excerpt of Dennis McCumber's book, *The Total Blues Guitarist*, available through Alfred Publishing.

Below are some turnaround licks for guitar and keyboard. These parts do not make up a larger composition; each lick is intended to stand alone. The chord symbols refer to the harmonic context of each lick. Have fun, and keep boogeying!

Guitar

The first turnaround lick is in the key of G and starts with a descending triplet figure that leads to the I chord, G7. The short single-note phrase beginning in measure 10 brings us to a series of partial chords in measure 12 that move chromatically from C7 to D7.



9 E7 A9 D7 G7 C7 C#7 D7

3 3 3 1 1 2 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 2

3 4 2 4 3 4 1 1 2 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 2

7 7 5 3 4 7 7 6 6 5 5 0 1 2 3 2 2 2 2 3 4 5

Our final lick is in the key of E and uses double stops throughout. The triplet figure on beat 3 of bars 9 and 10 is played by sliding the same shape over two frets. Notice that the final chord (usually a V7 chord) has been changed to an augmented chord, creating increased harmonic tension which will be resolved at the start of the next chorus.

Swing Eighths

Musical notation for bars 9 and 10. The key signature is E major (three sharps). The time signature is 4/4. The piece is in a swing feel. Chords are B7 and A7. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes. Fingering is indicated by numbers 1-3. Slurs and 'SL' (slide) markings are present. A triplet of eighth notes is shown on beat 3 of both bars. Below the staff are guitar fretboard diagrams for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves, showing fret numbers and slide directions.

Musical notation for bars 11 and 12. The key signature is E major (three sharps). The time signature is 4/4. The piece is in a swing feel. Chords are E7, A7, and Baug. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes. Fingering is indicated by numbers 1-3. Slurs and 'H' (hammer-on) markings are present. A triplet of eighth notes is shown on beat 3 of bar 11. Below the staff are guitar fretboard diagrams for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves, showing fret numbers and slide directions.

Keyboard

The first lick is in the key of F and adds some alterations to spice up the usual dominant harmonies we might hear in this style. The high G-note in the right hand is repeated until beat 1 of bar 11. Be aware that the left hand is playing in the treble clef to support such right-hand chord voicings more effectively.

Swing Eighths

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (F major/D minor). It consists of two systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

System 1 (Measures 9-10):

- Measure 9:** Chord C9. Right hand: Treble clef, notes G4, A4, B4, C5 (repeated eighth notes). Bass clef: notes F3, C4, G3, F3 (quarter notes). Fingerings: RH (5, 3, 3, 3, 3), LH (5, 1, 5, 3).
- Measure 10:** Chord Bb13. Right hand: Treble clef, notes Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5 (repeated eighth notes). Bass clef: notes F3, C4, G3, F3 (quarter notes). Fingerings: RH (5, 3, 3, 3, 3), LH (5, 1, 5, 3, 2, 1).

System 2 (Measures 11-14):

- Measure 11:** Chord F9. Right hand: Treble clef, notes F4, G4, A4, Bb4 (quarter notes). Bass clef: notes F3, C4, G3, F3 (quarter notes). Fingerings: RH (5, 2, 1), LH (1, 2, 5).
- Measure 12:** Chord C7. Right hand: Treble clef, notes G4, A4, B4, C5 (quarter notes). Bass clef: notes F3, C4, G3, F3 (quarter notes). Fingerings: RH (5, 3, 4, 2), LH (3, 3, 3, 3).
- Measure 13:** Chord Bb7. Right hand: Treble clef, notes Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5 (quarter notes). Bass clef: notes F3, C4, G3, F3 (quarter notes). Fingerings: RH (5, 2, 1), LH (1, 5, 5, 5).
- Measure 14:** Chord B7. Right hand: Treble clef, notes B4, C5, D5, Eb5 (quarter notes). Bass clef: notes F3, C4, G3, F3 (quarter notes). Fingerings: RH (5, 2, 1), LH (5, 5, 5, 2).

Next, we'll play a lick in D that will feature more single-note playing in the right hand. The grace notes in bars 9 and 10 give a good bluesy feel to these phrases. In bar 11, the two hands move in contrary motion and the lick ends on Aaug, the augmented V chord.

Swing Eighths

9 A7 G7

11 D7 A7 G7 G#7 Aaug

2 2 5 5 4 3 2 2 4 3 5 4 2 4 2 1

1 5 1 1 3 1 1 3 1 5 3 1 1 2 4 5

1 5 1 5 1 5 1 5 1 5 4 3 3

Finally, we'll play a lick in C. Again, the grace notes in the right-hand part are essential to giving this phrase a bluesy feel. The left hand plays a common boogie figure in bars 9 and 10 and adds some contrasting voicings and rhythms before the end.

Swing Eighths

9 G7 F7

2 2 3 2 5 4 3 5 4 3 1 1 4 2 1 2 1 2

2 5 1 5 1 5 2 5 1 5 1 5

11 C9 F7 F#7 G7

5 3 1 4 5 2 1 3 4 1 4 2 1

1 2 3 5 1 3 5 1 5 1 5

Conclusion

For more information on turnarounds, be sure to check out the Theory Corner section of this newsletter for even more examples that'll make you shine at the next jam session!

If you liked this excerpt, order Dennis McCumber's book, *The Total Blues Guitarist*, at www.alfred.com. In addition, be sure to check out his blues guitar lessons at www.WorkshopLive.com today!

To learn more about blues turnarounds, guitarists should check out the blues lessons "Turnarounds," "Theory of 6ths," "Soloing with 3rds and 6ths" and "Riff-Based Blues with 9-Chord Turnarounds," taught by Dennis McCumber, David Boye and Scott A. Smith.

Keyboardists will enjoy the Adult Refresher lesson "Why Am I Blue: Blues Scales and Progressions," taught by Leo Marchildon and Andrea Amos.

Keep wailin' on those blues—see you soon!