

Styles & Genres



American Music: Blues 4: Blues and Bluegrass

BILL MONROE, the "Father of Bluegrass" had a huge influence on popular music, not least because of his innovations in Bluegrass music. He learned a lot of old-time music from his mother's brother Pendleton,

known as Uncle Pen. In addition he was heavily influenced by a blues musician called Arnold Shultz, and the considerable blues influences can be heard in bluegrass music to this day.

Enhancing the Blues Scale

Last time we started subtracting notes from the D major scale. Now we're going to bring some of them back. First, we're going to keep the *flattened 3rd*

but also add the non-flattened 3rd. The great effect we're after is to slide from the *flattened 3rd* to the 3rd; in the D scale, that's the **F** to the **F#**. In the G scale, it's **Bb** to **B**, and in A it's **C** to **C#**. We'll also keep the *flattened 7th* and re-introduce the 6th.

Key of D: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: D4, E4, F4, F#4, G4, A4, B4. Tab: 3 4 0 3 0 5 | 3 0 0 |

Key of G: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4, A4, Bb4, B4, C5, D5, E5. Tab: 1 2 5 1 5 3 | 3 1 5 5 |

Key of A: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: A4, B4, C#4, C4, D5, E5, F#5. Tab: 3 4 0 3 0 5 | 5 3 0 0 |

The tune below makes much use of the two main elements discussed above: the *flattened 3rd to 3rd slide*, and the *flattened 7th* in the

three different keys, all over a 12-bar blues structure. You could also try improvising by

Downright Blue (Nigel Gatherer)

Chord progression: D | D | D | D7 | G | G | D | D | A | G7 | D | D

Tablature: 5 5 5 5 0 3 2 | 0 3 4 0 0 | 5 5 5 5 0 3 2 | 0 3 4 0 0 1 | 2 5 0 5 1 5 0 5 | 1 5 0 5 6 0 5 2 | 0 3 4 0 2 0 3 | 4 0 4 0 0 3 | 4 0 4 0 0 6 | 1 0 5 1 2 5 | 0 3 4 0 0 5 2 | 5 5 5 5