

Gianni Chiarello

# CONTEMPORARY BLUES CHORDS AND COMPING

Exploring rhythm guitar and the blues.

Audio Tracks  
Included





# CONTEMPORARY BLUES

## CHORDS AND COMPING

By Gianni Chiarello



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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **(Important: please read!)**

I have written this book to provide a variety of comping ideas for the beginner to advanced blues guitarist, trying to write exercises that could be played as 'standalone'. I thought of collecting a wide array of ideas to steer your playing in different directions, not only harmonically, but also rhythmically.

Most of the material in this book comes from my experience in playing countless blues, jazz, and funk gigs, and hours of listening to and transcribing from the classic records. Repetition is still the essence of creating a statement that has life of its own, so in most of these exercises you'll recognize a pattern that connects them all. I have tried, when applicable, to explain with simple harmonic concepts why I use a chord instead of another, but, as tradition dictates, try and learn the nuances by ear and by 'feel' first and foremost as timing, rhythmic feel, tone and intensity of playing are often impossible to notate.

After going through this book, keep adding to your vocabulary by transcribing from the masters and copying from your fellow musicians. I have added some blank templates at the end of the book for you to use. As I always suggest to my students, try to create a vocabulary of blues comping patterns to incorporate in your playing to then naturally build your very own style.

Don't be afraid to modify this material to fit your style and musical sensibility, most often when tradition is bridged with originality you have a winning combination.

I hope you will find the concepts in this book beneficial, and that you will incorporate some of these sounds in your everyday playing.

Best of luck!

Gianni Chiarello

## **ABOUT THE AUDIO TRACKS**

I have included with this publication a recording of all the examples, in MP3 format, for reference purposes. Once you have learnt the examples 'as written' I urge you to take chances and try to incorporate parts you like in your everyday playing.

A lot of the examples utilize 'MrG Blues Tracks' as backing tracks. This is an excellent set of blues backing tracks and an invaluable tool for all level musicians, covering a wide range of tempos and styles, in all 12 keys.

You can purchase these tracks here:

<http://www.mrgcentral.com/>

## TRACK 09: Cliché Phrase n3

Track 09: Cliché Phrase n3. The notation shows three systems of guitar tablature. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The first system has two measures with G7 and C7 chords. The second system has two measures with C7 and G7 chords. The third system has two measures with D7 and C7 chords, followed by a final measure with a G7 chord. The tablature shows fingerings and fret numbers for the strings.

I am sure by now you have understood the logic behind this kind of comping: below you will find four more examples of phrases.

As usual, to have full command of this style of comping, it is mandatory to know all this material in all keys, and sections of the guitar neck.

## TRACK 10: Other Cliché Phrases

Track 10: Other Cliché Phrases. The notation shows two systems of guitar tablature. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The first system has two measures with G7 and C7 chords. The second system has two measures with G7 and C7 chords. The tablature shows fingerings and fret numbers for the strings.

## MODERN BLUES STYLES

In this section I wanted to bring a diverse selection of what I consider necessary knowledge for a working blues guitarist. Over my years of performing I have been asked to play in the blues styles explained in the following pages countless times.

Again, for exercise sake, some of these examples might seem a bit 'mechanical'. Towards the end of the book, you will find two full length, comping examples that incorporate some of these styles in a more traditional format. It is paramount to listen to many modern blues recording to find them in their natural setting.

As we have just mentioned Stevie Ray Vaughan, I'd like to pay tribute to this great master with a classic, Hendrix influenced, comping idea.



### TRACK 18: SRV Shuffle Style

The musical notation for Track 18: SRV Shuffle Style is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a guitar tablature line below. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The piece is in 4/4 time and features a shuffle feel. The notation is divided into three systems. The first system is labeled 'E' and consists of four measures. The second system is labeled 'A' and 'E' and consists of four measures. The third system is labeled 'B', 'A', 'E', and 'B' and consists of four measures. The tablature line shows fret numbers (0-10) and includes some triplets and bends. The piece ends with a double bar line.

## TRACK 38: Cooler Blues

The musical notation for Track 38: Cooler Blues is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1-4) is labeled 'Am'. The second system (bars 5-8) is labeled 'Dm'. The third system (bars 9-10) is labeled 'Em<sup>11</sup> C#m<sup>11</sup>', 'Dm<sup>11</sup> Bm<sup>11</sup>', 'Am', and 'E<sup>13</sup>'. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature. The bass line is written on a grand staff with a bass clef and includes fingerings and a 'Miles' trick' in bar 2.

In the example above I have tried to incorporate the Miles' trick in a minor blues in the key of A. In bar 2 I have used a pedal note E and the fourth underneath it moves first two consecutive half steps down, then two consecutive half steps up (bar 4).

The same thing happens in the following four bars, obviously transposed to accommodate the minor chord on the 4<sup>th</sup>, D minor.

To maintain the quartal style I have used the chords in bars 9 and 10, if you notice Em<sup>11</sup>, C#m<sup>11</sup>, Dm<sup>11</sup> and Bm<sup>11</sup> are all built in fourths.



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From the Introduction:

'I have written this book with the intent of helping the intermediate blues/rock player to break out of the well known 'box standard pentatonic shape' and venture towards more contemporary sounds. The blues language has developed in the last few decades from just being pentatonic based, to a more articulate language, thanks to fusion and jazz influences. I have been asked too many times during my years of teaching how to go beyond the usual pentatonic phrases that we have all heard way too many times, so I thought of collecting a wide array of ideas to steer your playing in different directions, not only harmonically, but also rhythmically'.

The ebook is a digital download in the popular Pdf format and includes a recording of all audio examples in MP3 format.

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*D - Brown Funk*  
*C - Rhumba Blues*  
*Am - Minor Blues*  
*G - Slow Gospel*  
*B - Rockabilly*  
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*Gb - Cold Fusion*  
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### **'MrG Blues Tracks Vol 2, Funk and Soul'**

*E – Groovin'*  
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*C – Drunk Funk*  
*D – Money Groove*  
*Gb – Slow Pace*  
*G – Motor City*  
*F – Chillin'*  
*Bb – Got Soul*  
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*Bb – Relax*  
*Eb – Stone In My Shoe*  
*G – Stevie's Shuffle*  
*Db – Fast Lane*  
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*F – Good Old R&R*  
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# **Contemporary Blues Chords and Comping**

**by Gianni Chiarello**

**An in-depth exploration of the twelve bar blues,  
from classic R&R grooves to the most  
modern Blues and Fusion sounds,  
following a journey through different comping  
styles and techniques.**