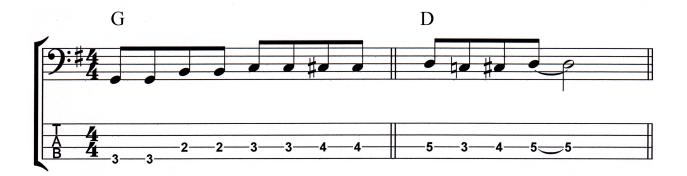
Bass Fundamentals Column #12 – Blues Pt. 2

In Part 1 on playing Blues, you were introduced to the basic Blues progression, and a few variations on the construction of the core bass part to play the vaunted **I - IV - V**. We continue in the key of **G**, for consistency and simplicity. You are encouraged to move into all 12 keys with this material, so you will be comfortable no matter where you are playing on the fret board.

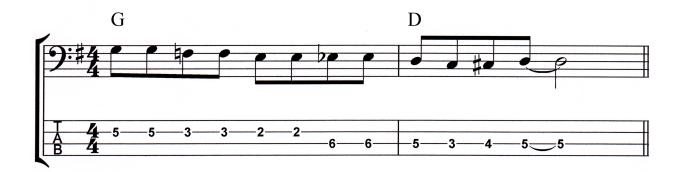
One of the trickiest aspects of a good Blues progression is the "turnaround". The turnaround can make or break a song, literally. It is also one of the places you can create a "signature" component in your style. A turnaround is simply how you will end the progression and get back to the beginning. And there are many ways to do this. We don't need to repeat what you've already done, what you have already played in Part One. That approach is a kind of "brick wall" approach, where you play the same pattern for all positions.

To keep things simple, we'll use the 12 bar progression structure in Part One.

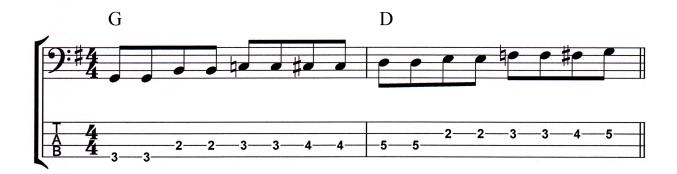
The first example is basically a "walk up" to the V, with a little quick repeat of the last few notes of the climb to finish the progression and set up returning to the I chord to start the progression again. We start in Measure 11 in the I position and walk up to, in Measure 12, the V position.



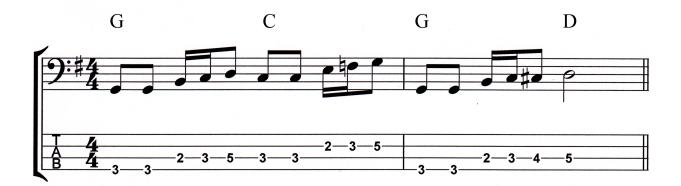
The second example demonstrates "walking down" to the V position from the octave of the I root, with the same little tag as in the first example; again, beginning in the 11th measure.



In the third example is demonstrated a walking line that plays "through" the V position and walks you back to the I octave. When you start the progression again, you simply drop back to the lower I root tone. Start in Measure 11 here, too.



For the fourth example, we're going to create a little variation. Beginning in Measure 11, take note of the quick changing from the I to the IV, back to the I and on to the V. This variation on the turnaround is actually quite popular, and we would be quite remiss to not make you aware of it.



For example five, we switch to a **twelve-eight** time signature, which has a triplet feel (as most Blues tunes tend to feature), for a more "swing" oriented flow. Also beginning in Measure 11, this progression continues the idea of the fourth example, doing a quick change from the I to the IV, back to the I and up to the V. Take note of the staccato notes, followed by a rest in the two measures. Staccato notes are played very "short", meaning sound the note and then quickly

kill it.



The final example is an odd ball because we are extending the progression to 14 measures. This is not as uncommon as you think. A lot of early Blues songs were known for having slightly longer progressions, the most common being a 16 bar, which is also a bit of an odd ball these days. But you should be aware they do exist, and you will run into them from time to time. So, for this example, with a slight Bossa feel, we start in Measure 11 with the I, move to the IV in Measure 12, and back to the I in 13, finally to the V in Measure 14.



With these six examples, you begin to get a sense that turnarounds are not just arbitrary endings. They have to be practical and make sense. They have to "point" back to the I, the beginning of the progression.

Study a lot of Blues tunes and see what the Old School guys are doing. They'll do some of what we've covered here, but they will also be playing some very different things, too. Make sure you've done your homework and listened to the classic stock of tunes going back 60 and more years!

In future columns, we'll revisit the Blues. There's always more to learn.

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