

chapter two blues scales andy drudy

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Introduction

When you think of learning blues on guitar, you might picture classic riffs, soulful bends, and the unmistakable call and response structure that defines the genre. Yet, behind every expressive lick lies a foundation of theory that can transform a casual player into a confident improviser. One of the most celebrated resources for mastering that foundation is **Andy Drudy's "Blues Guitar" series**, and specifically, the second chapter of his instructional material focuses on the essential *blues scales*. This article dives deep into Chapter Two, exploring its concepts, practical applications, and how you can integrate them into your daily practice routine.

Who Is Andy Drudy?

Andy Drudy is a contemporary guitarist, educator, and composer known for his clear teaching style and deep understanding of blues and jazz guitar. He has produced a plethora of instructional videos, books, and masterclasses that emphasize both technical skill and musical expression. Drudy's work is highly regarded for its balance between theory and real world application, making complex ideas accessible to players of all levels.

Why Focus on Chapter Two?

Chapter Two of Andy Drudy's blues curriculum is dedicated to the **blues scales**, a cornerstone for any guitarist looking to navigate the 12 bar blues, pentatonic licks, and beyond. While the first chapter typically covers the basics of rhythm and groove, Chapter Two equips you with the melodic tools needed for soloing and improvisation. Understanding these scales not only enhances your soloing ability but also deepens your sense of phrasing, tension, and resolution.

Key Takeaways from Chapter Two

- Definition and structure of the blues scale.
- Relationship between the blues scale and the pentatonic scale.
- Practical exercises for mastering the scale in various positions.
- Techniques for bending, sliding, and vibrato within the scale.
- Application of the scale in different keys and chord progressions.

The Anatomy of the Blues Scale

The blues scale is essentially a minor pentatonic scale with an added "blue note." In the key of A, for example, the A minor blues scale would be:

1. A (root)
2. C (minor third)
3. D (fourth)
4. (blue note, augmented fourth)
5. E (fifth)
6. G (minor seventh)

Notice how the blue note (D# in A) introduces a characteristic tension that resolves naturally back to the root or the dominant note. This tension is what gives the blues its unmistakable emotional quality.

Comparing Minor Pentatonic and Blues Scale

The minor pentatonic scale consists of five notes: root, minor third, fourth, fifth, and minor seventh. The blues scale simply adds the blue note (the flattened fifth). This small addition dramatically expands the melodic possibilities and is a primary reason why the blues scale is favored by improvisers.

Positioning the Scale on the Neck

Andy Drudy emphasizes the importance of learning the blues scale in multiple positions. Rather than relying on a single shape, the goal is to become comfortable navigating the entire fretboard. Here's a quick guide:

- Position 1: 1st–5th frets (root on 5th fret of the low E string).
- Position 2: 5th–9th frets (root on 7th fret of the low E string).
- Position 3: 9th–13th frets (root on 10th fret of the low E string).

By practicing each position, you'll develop muscle memory that allows you to switch seamlessly during a solo.

Chapter Two: Detailed Breakdown

Section 1: Scale Construction

In this section, Drudy walks through the interval structure, using both visual diagrams and audio examples. He explains how the flat fifth (blue note) creates a “bluesy” sound and demonstrates how to integrate it with the minor pentatonic foundation. The section includes:

- Interval notation (e.g., 1–b3–4–b5–5–b7).
- Fingerings for each position.
- Common licks that illustrate the use of the blue note.

Section 2: Techniques for Expressiveness

Here, Drudy focuses on the expressive tools that bring the scale to life:

1. Bending: How to bend the blue note up a semitone for a “crying” effect.
2. Sliding: Upward and downward slides between scale degrees.
3. Vibrato: Adding vibrato to sustain notes for emotional depth.
4. Hammer On and Pull Off: Techniques to create fluid phrases.

Each technique is paired with a short exercise that gradually increases in speed and complexity.

Section 3: Application in 12 Bar Blues

Andy Drudy demonstrates how to apply the blues scale over the classic 12 bar blues progression. He breaks down the chord changes (I–IV–V) and shows how to target specific chord tones with the scale. The key points include:

- Targeting the root and fifth on the downbeat.
- Using the blue note on the backbeat for tension.
- Resolving phrases on the last chord of each cycle.

Section 4: Advanced Licks and Phrasing

For players who have mastered the basics, this section introduces more complex licks that incorporate:

- Octave jumps.

- Syncopated rhythmic patterns.
- Chordal improvisation using the scale as a framework.

Drudy encourages experimentation, suggesting that players record themselves to analyze phrasing and timing.

Practical Exercises for Mastery

Exercise 1: Scale Run in All Positions

Play the blues scale ascending and descending in each position, focusing on clean transitions between positions. Aim for 60–90 seconds per position, then gradually increase the tempo.

Exercise 2: Bending and Vibrato Drill

Select a phrase that includes the blue note. Bend the note up a half step, hold it, and apply a slow vibrato. Repeat across all positions.

Exercise 3: 12 Bar Blues Solo

Using the blues scale, improvise a solo over a 12 bar blues progression. Record the session, then review the recording to identify moments of tension and resolution.

Exercise 4: Lick Transposition

Take a favorite lick from the book and transpose it to a different key. This exercise reinforces your understanding of the scale's structure and improves fretboard familiarity.

Integrating Chapter Two into Your Practice Routine

Consistency is key. Here's a sample weekly schedule:

- Monday: Scale runs and bending exercises.
- Tuesday: 12 bar blues solo practice.
- Wednesday: Review licks and transpositions.
- Thursday: Record a full improvisation session.
- Friday: Focus on rhythm and timing with a metronome.
- Saturday: Explore advanced licks from Chapter Two.
- Sunday: Rest and listen to blues recordings for inspiration.

Adjust the schedule based on your goals, but ensure that each session includes both technical drills and creative exploration.

Why Chapter Two Matters for Your Musical Growth

Mastering the blues scale is more than a technical milestone; it's a gateway to musical storytelling. By learning how to weave tension and release, you'll be able to:

- Compose memorable riffs that resonate with listeners.
- Improvise confidently over complex chord changes.
- Blend blues with other genres like jazz, rock, and funk.
- Develop a personal voice that reflects your musical identity.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Even seasoned players can fall into pitfalls when working with the blues scale:

- Over bending: Bending too far can sound unnatural. Practice controlled bends that stay within a half step range.
- Skipping the blue note: Omitting the blue note can make your solo feel flat. Make it a point to include it in every phrase.
- Playing too fast: Speed should not come at the expense of clarity. Use a metronome to gradually increase tempo while maintaining precision.
- Ignoring dynamics: Dynamics add emotion. Vary your attack and volume to create contrast.

Resources for Further Study

To complement Chapter Two, consider the following:

- Andy Drudy's "Blues Guitar" Video Series: Watch the full playlist to see the concepts in action.
- Music Theory Books: "The Guitarist's Guide to Theory" offers deeper insights into scale construction.
- Online Communities: Join forums like Reddit r/guitar or Ultimate Guitar to discuss licks and get feedback.
- Practice Apps: Use metronome and loop apps to refine timing and repetition.

Conclusion

Chapter Two of Andy Drudy's blues curriculum is a treasure trove for any guitarist eager to deepen their understanding of the blues scale. By mastering the scale's structure, practicing essential techniques, and applying them within real world contexts, you'll build a solid foundation for expressive soloing. Remember, the journey from technical proficiency to musical expression is gradual—consistency, patience, and a willingness to experiment will carry you forward. So grab your guitar, set the metronome, and let the blues scale guide you toward a richer, more soulful sound.

Tags: #chapter #blues #scales #andy #drudy

