

The Twelve-Bar Blues



Name _____ Form _____

The “Blues” has been an important influence on modern pop music and jazz.

It is descended from negro spirituals of the Black American slaves, and the music gets its characteristic sound from the use of flattened notes within chords.

This has developed into the “12 Bar Blues”, a chord progression which led to the great “Rock’n’Roll” era.

In C major, the “12 Bar Blues” chord progression is

C / / / /	C / / / /	C / / / /	C / / / /
F / / / /	F / / / /	C / / / /	C / / / /
G(7) / / / /	F / / / /	C / / / /	C (G7) / / / /

- Chord of C = C E G
- Chord of F = F A C
- Chord of G = G B D
- Chord of G7 = G B D F

The Blues song is in a very simple format and is usually concerned with a sad subject:

<i>Woke up this mornin'</i> C / / / /	<i>feelin'</i> C / / / /	<i>blue</i> C / / / /	C / / / /
<i>Woke up this mornin'</i> F / / / /	<i>feelin'</i> F / / / /	<i>blue</i> C / / / /	C / / / /
<i>realised</i> G(7) / / / /	<i>I was missin'</i> F / / / /	<i>you.</i> C / / / /	C (G7) / / / /

Tasks

1. Where did the Blues music come from?
2. What gives Blues music its characteristic sound?
3. What is the “12 Bar Blues”?
4. Write out the “12 Bar Blues” chord sequence in C major.
5. Compose a melody to fit with the words of the Blues song above. Write down your melody using staff notation or note letter names.)

