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Electric Blues Essentials

LEVEL 3 • Guitar Skills



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8 Bar Blues

UNIT 3 • **LESSON 2** << PREVIOUS NEXT >>

Lesson notes Interactive tab Diagrams

The Chords

Now we have the basic 8 bar concept in place, let's take a look at the actual chords we are playing, and how the diminished chord sits within the progression. The tab gives us the exact way we are playing the chords, but the fundamental outline of the chord progression is as shown here:

$Bb7$ | $Bb7$ | $Eb9$ | $E_{dim}7$ |
 $Bb7$ | $F7$ $Eb7$ | Turnaround | |

Diminished 7th?

Let's talk about that "dim7" chord on the chord chart, which is short for diminished 7th, otherwise known as whole diminished. First up, the construction and look of our dim7 chord is as follows (giving you two ways to fret it):

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For unit 3, we return to the classic blues shuffle sound, but this time working through an 8 bar blues! Ever heard of it? Well, it's far more common than you think, with Clapton, Freddie King and many more being great lovers of the style!

Lessons:

- 12 Bar Vs 8 Bar
- The Chords
- The Solo
- Diminished Run
- Solo Complete

UNIT 4

Soul Blues

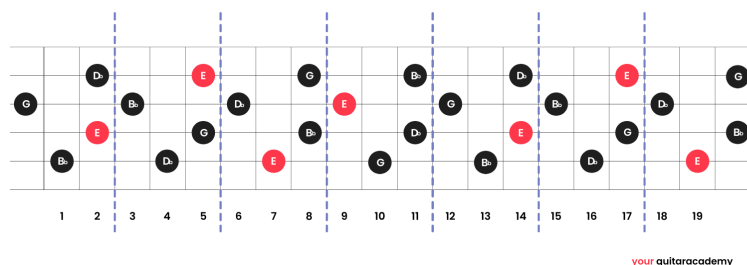
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1, b3, b5, bb7

the double flat 7th is the key difference between a half and whole diminished. It essentially becomes a 6th!

The beauty of a whole diminished chord is that it is entirely made up of minor 3rds. The interval between the first and second note is a minor 3rd, the interval between the 2nd and 3rd note is a minor 3rd, and the interval between the 3rd and 4th note is a minor 3rd. Even the one between the 4th back to the root is a minor third. For this magical reason, **the chord is completely symmetrical** and therefore repeats every minor third interval on the fretboard. This diagram helps to explain this further:

E whole diminished chord across the neck (symmetrical chords)



cool... but, why can I use it here?

The answer is actually pretty simple, and it's all about tension and release. The Edim7 chord is almost exactly the same as the Eb7 chord, bar the root note. Take a look:

$E_b7 = E_b, \underline{G, B_b, D_b}$

$E_{dim}7 = E, \underline{G, B_b, D_b}$

So, using the diminished chord is not actually straying too far from the dominant chord, but it adds a **new layer of tension and pull taking us back to the root chord of Bb7**. This is a perfect example of tension and release in the blues, and it's very common from the IV chord to the I chord, although you could experiment using other chord movements. Pretty cool, right?! 🎸🎸



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