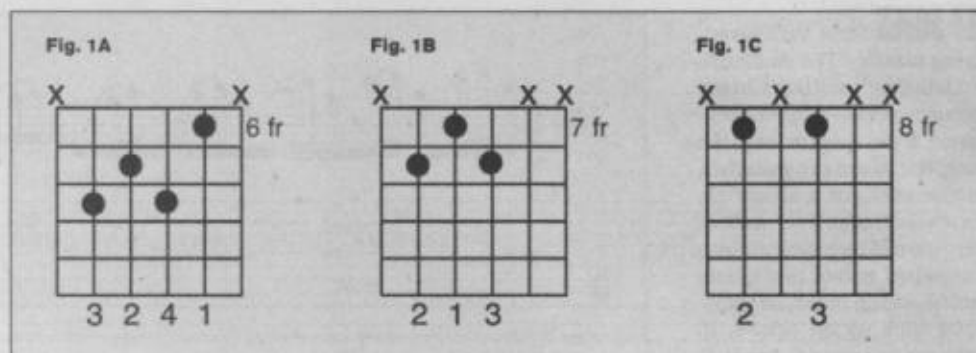


# "Three O'Clock Blues" B.B. King

**KEY NOTES** Electric blues doesn't get much better than this. While most of B.B. King's notes on this number come from the B $\flat$  minor pentatonic scale (B $\flat$ -D $\flat$ -E $\flat$ -F-A $\flat$ ), dig how from the very beginning he inserts chromatic passing tones (the E between E $\flat$  and F in measure 2) and chromatic approach tones (the D $\flat$ -D $\sharp$  move at the end of measure 3). Also noteworthy are his syncopated 16th-note rhythms, which, against the slow blues shuffle, lend a jazzy feel. Pay special attention to how King selectively bends strings—normally a quarter step or half step—and how he tends to use hammer-ons and slides to smooth things out. Then take a look at his chord fragments,



ALBUM  
Ultimate  
Collection  
(Geffen)



which he uses to accentuate his phrases. Fig. 1A shows the common fingering of an F7 chord; Figs. 1B-C show how King pares it down to three notes, then just two. With the smooth distortion his amp generates, these chord fragments generate gobs of

complex overtones—any more notes and the sound would wash out altogether.

**BIG PICTURE** From the late 1930s through the '50s, it was the dream of every blues artist to front a big band with horns. Horn players prefer the flat keys (F, B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , etc.), and so it behooved

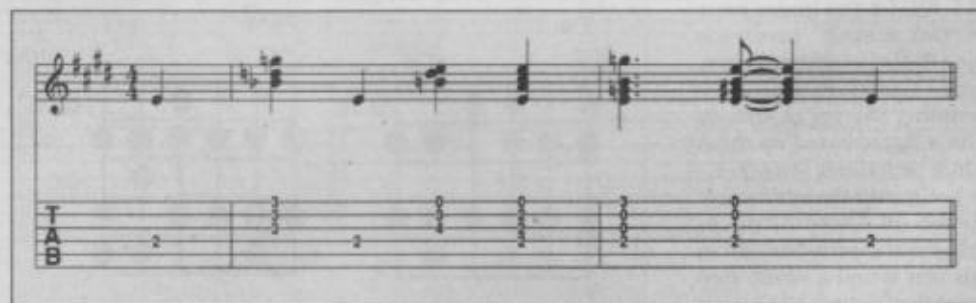
any guitarist at that time to be able to play in those keys, as well as in the guitar's regular open keys (E, A, D, G, and C). Next time you're jammin' with your blues buds, try a slow blues in B $\flat$  like King's here, and see if you can ride the changes as well as you would in, say, the key of A. —DOUGLAS BALDWIN

# "Spoonful" Howlin' Wolf

**KEY NOTES** Born Chester Arthur Burnett in West Point, Mississippi, Howlin' Wolf was the missing link between rural Southern blues and its urban, Chicago-born offspring. With a voice that could peel paint, Wolf found a winning formula in the songwriting of Willie Dixon and the guitar work of Hubert Sumlin. With Dixon often whispering lyrics to Wolf as tape was rolling and Sumlin playing greasy leads right over the vocals, they created the raucous, hellish brand of house-party blues perfectly embodied in "Spoonful." Wobbling between E minor and E major, Sumlin's lead lines are largely in E minor pentatonic (E-G-A-B-D), played in the standard box position found at the 12th fret.



ALBUM  
Howlin' Wolf/  
Moanin' in the  
Moonlight  
(Chess)



Dig his stinging bends within this box, particularly from the 4th of the scale (A) up to—and often *not quite* up to—the 5th (B). Also, scan the many 16th-note triplets that involve both hammer-ons (G to A) and pull-offs (back to G). Beginning at the end of the sixth bar is a cool E-G motif that occurs throughout the piece. Play this part staccato

and with a slight palm mute. Also, you might want to give the G notes a little nudge from time to time, for the appropriate blues sass. But more important is nailing Sumlin's austere tone, which is just dirty enough to sound positively rude.

**BIG PICTURE** "Spoonful" thrives on an eerie ensemble feel. While there's nothing in the way of a chord progression, the inter-

play of the piano and a dark second guitar adds an undeniable harmonic edge to the proceedings. Fig. 1 is a fair representation, rolled into one part, of the verse patterns played by the piano and second guitar. Grab the E note on the D string with your 2nd finger, keeping it there throughout, and barre the top three strings with your 4th finger on beat 1 of bar 1, and the rest should fall into place naturally. —DOUGLAS BALDWIN



## THREE O'CLOCK BLUES

As Recorded by B.B. King

(From the Geffen Recording ULTIMATE COLLECTION)

Transcribed by Adam Perlmutter

Words and Music by B.B. King  
and Jules Bihari

### Intro

Freely (♩ = ♩)

♩ = 70

Gtr. 1 (clean)

*mf* 1/4

F7 Eb7

11-12-13 12-13-12 11-10 11-6-9 6-8-6

TAB

0:15

### Verse 1

Bb7 Eb7 Bb7 F7 Bb7

1. Now, here it is three o'clock in the mornin'...

1/4

Eb7 Bb7 Eb7

1/4

Bb7

1/2 1/4

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# Three O'Clock Blues

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F7 Eb7 Bb7 Eb7

0:55

Verse 2

Bb7 F7 Bb7 Eb7

1. Lord, I've looked around me, well my...

Bb7 Eb7

Bb7 F7

Eb7 Bb7 Eb7 Bb7 F7

1:36

## Guitar Solo

B $\flat$ 7 Eb7

B $\flat$ 7

E $\flat$ 7

B $\flat$ 7

F7 Eb7



# Three O'Clock Blues

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2:17

Verse 3

Bb7

Bb7 Eb7 Bb7 F7 Bb7

3. Well, goodbye, everybody...

Eb7 Bb7

Eb5 Bb7

F7 Eb7 Bb7 G9 Bb9

## Lyrics

### Verse 1

Now, here it is three o'clock in the morning,  
And I can't even close my eyes.  
Oh, three o'clock in the morning, baby,  
Can't even close my eyes.  
Well, I can't find my baby,  
Lord, and I can't be satisfied.

### Verse 2

Lord, I've looked around me,  
Well my baby, she can't be found.  
Well looked all around me, people,  
Well my baby can't be found.  
Well, if I don't find my baby,  
I'm going to the bowling ground  
That's where the mens hang out.  
Well, I'm bound to find her.

### Verse 3

Well, goodbye, everybody.  
Lord, I believe this is the end.  
Whoa, goodbye, everybody,  
Lord I believe this is the end.  
Well, you can tell my baby  
To forgive me for my sins.