

Altered Pentatonic Scales

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Ex. 1 E Pentatonic

Ex. 2 E Pentatonic $\flat 6$

Am/maj9

Ex. 3

D9

Ex. 4

NO SINGLE-LINE PATTERN FALLS more comfortably under the left hand than the pentatonic scale. If your pentatonic licks sound stale, try altering one of the notes to add zip. For example, lowering the 6th degree opens up a whole new palette of colors. The patterns will still feel comfortable, and you'll be able to play cool lines over complex chords.

Ex. 1 shows a standard *E*-major pentatonic scale (*E, F#, G#, B, C#*); Ex. 2 shows the scale with the lowered 6 (*E, F#, G#, B, Cb*).

This pentatonic $\flat 6$ scale works well over a minor triad or a minor/major 9—a frequently used jazz chord. Rockers will recognize the latter as the second chord in "Stairway to Heaven." Play the scale from the 5 of the chord—*E* pentatonic $\flat 6$ against *Am/maj9* (Ex. 3).

To create the jazzy Lydian $\flat 7$ sound, play the pentatonic $\flat 6$ a whole-step above a dominant chord. (See FYI below for Lydian $\flat 7$ details.) For instance, try *E* pentatonic $\flat 6$

against *D9*, as in Ex. 4. You can hear this color against the second-to-last chord in Clapton's original version of "Layla."

Ex. 5 shows how the pentatonic $\flat 6$ cre-

ates modal color over a stock *E*-major triad. Once you are fluent with this altered pentatonic scale, work out other fingerings and develop your own patterns. ■

Ex. 5

E

T
A
B