

# **Building A Practice**

**Session 1.0**

**Mr. Charlie**

**12 Bar Blues in A**

**RandyAdamsMusic.com**

# Building A Practice 1.0

Let's get into building a practice together. This material will serve as a supplement to our video lessons.

We are going to be going over a lot of material. Some you may know and some may be new.

No matter what if we consider all of this material deeply. Listen, learn and feel it, we will become better improvisers.

First up we are going to work with a 12 bar blues in "A" using "McCharlie" as our model.

Here is our basic form.

|                |                |                          |                          |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A <sup>7</sup> | A <sup>7</sup> | A <sup>7</sup>           | A <sup>7</sup>           |
| D <sup>7</sup> | D <sup>7</sup> | A <sup>7</sup>           | A <sup>7</sup>           |
| E <sup>7</sup> | D <sup>7</sup> | A <sup>7</sup><br>* riff | A <sup>7</sup><br>* riff |

\* There is a 4 bar riff intro and the riff is usually repeated at the end of the piece and solos.

# Building A Practice 1.0

I usually play the riff something like this

A<sup>7</sup>

Some variations

★ try this melody in every different octave. It starts on a D.

We are going to begin by exploring a blues scale starting on A around these 3 basic chord positions

A<sup>7</sup> 0 2 2 0 0 0 3 2 2 2 0 D<sup>7</sup> 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 E<sup>7</sup> 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0

A<sup>7</sup> 2 1 0 2 1 0 2 1 0 D<sup>7</sup> 2 1 0 2 1 0 2 1 0 E<sup>7</sup> 2 1 0 2 1 0 2 1 0

A<sup>7</sup> 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 D<sup>7</sup> 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 E<sup>7</sup> 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12

★ we are centered around the open position,

5<sup>th</sup> fret and 12<sup>th</sup> fret. I find these are common reference points. We will expand later

# Building A Practice 1.0

3

\* You can find many good versions of "Mr. Charlie" by the Grateful Dead on Youtube. Listen to many versions and get a feel for the groove. Try and emulate the riff on the intro.

\* Play through the form in each of the chord positions outlined. You can play chord fragments if you'd like too.

\* If you've done any of this thousands of times a few thousand more won't hurt 😊

Here are the notes of our Blues scale

A C D E<sup>b</sup> E G

and the notes in our chords

A<sup>7</sup> A C E G

D<sup>7</sup> D F<sup>#</sup> A C

E<sup>7</sup> E G<sup>#</sup> B D

\* you can see that there are at least a few tones in common between the scale and the chords. Maybe we can nudge some closer with bends.

\* like on A the C can move towards C<sup>#</sup>  
or on the E<sup>7</sup> the G can move towards G<sup>#</sup>

# Building A Practice 1.0

(4)

now for our basic scale positions.

\* There are going to be many more but we will begin here.

A Blues.

0 3 } 0 3 0 (1) 2 0 2 1 3 (4) 0 3 - 5

0 3 } 0 3 0 (1) 2 0 2 1 3 - 5 3 5

3 5 3 5 (6) 7 5 7 5 7 (8) 5 8 5 8

3 5 3 5 (6) 7 5 7 5 7 (8) 9 8 10 8 10 (11) 12

} 5 7 (4) 5 8 5 8

10 12 } 10 12 (13) 14 12 14 13 15 (16) 12 15 - 17

} 13 15 (11) 12 15 - 17

\* I think these positions are close to the ones that most of us begin with. They are also where many end up 😊

# Building A Practice 1.0

(5)

These are the materials we will use to begin our daily practice.

\* The first part of our practice is centered around developing our listening and feel for the flow of melody against our blues harmony. \* Remember our center of tonal gravity is "A". It's a "Blues In A" even though you'll eventually be using a lot of sounds in the flow.

① Play each chord, one at a time in the order of the form of the tune. Ascend and Descend through the scale with no alteration.

Listen and feel each note and series of notes deeply against the chord. You can also sound the root of each chord as a kind of drone to listen and feel against.

\* Remember to do this in each position. Many times over a long period of time.

② Let's start ~~altering~~ altering some tones to expand our colors. In A<sup>7</sup> explore the space between C and C<sup>#</sup>. Explore the ~~space~~ space between D - E<sup>b</sup> and E. In the E<sup>7</sup> listen between G and G<sup>#</sup>. In the D<sup>7</sup> listen how far you can move from D.

# Building A Practice 1.0

(6)

\* remember this is a dynamic process.  
Experiment with your flow. Expand your phrasing. Bend, slide. Use vibratos and dynamics. Different attacks and articulations. Hammer ons and pull offs. Find your feel. Your way of playing.

4) Now we are going to expand the notes we are using by expanding our Blues Scale to include any note that is in the chord we are playing that is not in the scale.

to A7 we can add C#

to D7 we can add F#

to E7 we can add G# and B

\* experiment with bending to these or playing them as discrete tones.

Here are a few examples of the C# added when we are playing A7

5 8 5 8-7 5-6  
↑ C#

5 7 5-6 7 7 5-6 | 7 0 3 1-2 2 0 2 3 0

# The F# on D7 Building A Practice 1-0

8-5 7 8-5 7 8-5 7 // The F# and B on the F#  
3-4 0 3 0 2 0-1

\* experiment with each position. Add these kinds of ideas to the straight blues scale and the bent bluesy notes.

We will end with these ideas in this session. There is plenty to explore. Add these ideas to the practice you are building every day.

1.1 we will start exploring adding major scales and various chord position strategies across the entire neck.