



Turnarounds

By David Barrett, Mel Bay's HarmonicaSessions® eZine

October 2005

Most players have one or two cliché turnaround licks they use too often. This area of the twelve bar blues progression can get old if the same licks are used. This month I've notated 24 examples of cool turnarounds to add to your repertoire.

There are four common ways to treat the turnaround area (the last two measures of the twelve bar blues form).

#1 - Play Nothing!

This is a perfect place to rest and let the band play a bit. Give your solo some breathing room.

#2 - Cliché Turnaround

This is the good 'ol lick that has been used to death for seventy years. Examples 1 and 3 are good examples of this. These are OK to use, though you really could come up with something better!

#3 - Build

The next chorus of your solo is only measures away. This is a great place to build up to the next chorus instead of playing a cliché lick. You can think of this area as a big pickup. This is of tremendous help in making your solos flow from chorus to the next more smoothly. Examples 8 through 10 represent this technique well.

#4 - Start The Next Chorus Early

Rod Piazza brought this idea up at a recent Harmonica Masterclass® Workshop. Somewhere in the turnaround area start the lick of your next chorus early. If the lick for the next chorus starts on a 4 draw/5 draw shake, then start the shake early. As Rod stated, this helps to blur the lines from one chorus to the next. Great idea! This goes out of the scope of learning two measure turnaround licks, but is a good technique to bring up.

The following pages reflect turnarounds I use often and some turnarounds from various famous artists. Try to memorize four or five to give you a good base to draw from. Each turnaround is preceded by a **V-IV** lick to help give you context.

Ex. 1 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2+ 1 1

Turnaround

Ex. 2 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3 4 4+ 5+ 6+ 6+ 1 1

Ex. 3 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 1 2 2' 1 1

Ex. 4 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3'' 3 4 4+ 4 3' 3'' 2 2'' 1 4+ 1+

Ex. 5 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3 4 5 4 4+ 3+ 3' 2 2'' 1 2' 3'' 1 (1+)

Ex. 6 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 6+ 5 4 4+ 3' 4 3' 2 1 2 3'' 1

Ex. 7 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 5 4 3 5+ 2+ 2 3'' 2 1 2' 3'' 1

Ex. 8 **V7** **IV7** **I7** **V7**

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3 3'' 2 1 1 2' 3'' 3 4+ 4

Ex. 9 V7 IV7 I7 Build Lick V7

Ex. 10 V7 IV7 I7 William Clarke Build

Ex. 11 V7 IV7 I7 James Cotton V7

Ex. 12 V7 IV7 I7 Big Walter Horton V7

Ex. 13 V7 IV7 I7 George "Harmonica" Smith V7

Ex. 14 V7 IV7 I7 Paul Butterfield V7

Ex. 15 V7 IV7 I7 Little Walter V7

Ex. 16 V7 IV7 I7 Little Walter V7

Ex. 17 V7 IV7 I7 Little Walter V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3 3 5+ 4 3 1+ 2+ 3+ 2 1 2" 1

Ex. 18 V7 IV7 I7 Little Walter V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 1 3 2 1 2 3 1 2 3" 2" 1

Ex. 19 V7 IV7 I7 Little Walter V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 3 2 2 (2+) (1+) 3 2 3 1 1 1+

Ex. 20 V7 IV7 I7 Kim Wilson V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 2" 2" 1 2 1+ 2 2 3 1 1 (3+) (2+) (1+)

Ex. 21 V7 IV7 I7 Kim Wilson V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 5 5+ 4 3' 3 3 4 2 1 2" 1

Ex. 22 V7 IV7 I7 Louis Myers V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3' 2 1 2 2+ 2+ 2 2" 1 1 (2) (3+) (1) (2+)

Ex. 23 V7 IV7 I7 Big Walter Horton V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 3 3 4 5+ 6+ 2 2 1

Ex. 24 V7 IV7 I7 Rod Piazza V7

(5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ (5)₄ 4 3' 4' 3 4+ 3' 2 2 1 3 3 4 5+ 4 4 3 2 1 5+ 3 2 1 2 2" 2" 2" 2 1

About the Author David Barrett
<http://www.harmonicmasterclass.com/david.htm>