

chapter two: fourths

One technique that gives a modern sound to a blues is the use of fourths. Blues heads such as “In ‘n Out” (Joe Henderson *In ‘n Out* (Blue Note CDP 724382915621 Rec. 1964), “Blues On The Corner” (McCoy Tyner *The Real McCoy* (Blue Note CDP 7465122 Rec. 1967) and numerous others by such jazz artists as Wayne Shorter, Miles Davis and Woody Shaw make extensive use of fourths. Fourths give an open sound to comping or to solos. With this in mind, what follows are some fourth voicings that can be used for a blues in the key of F. I’ll show you how they might be used for comping or soloing over a 12-bar blues.

F7 FOURTH VOICINGS
Harmonize a F Mixolydian Scale in fourths
F Mixolydian = Fifth mode of B♭ Major Scale

Ex. 10

F7 - comping fourth voicings

F Mixolydian scale harmonized in fourths



TAB
 3 2 1 4 3 3 6 5 5 8 7 7 10 8 8 6 5 5 8 8 8 10 10 8

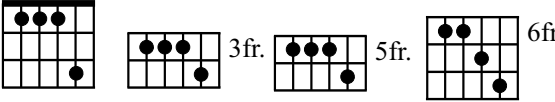
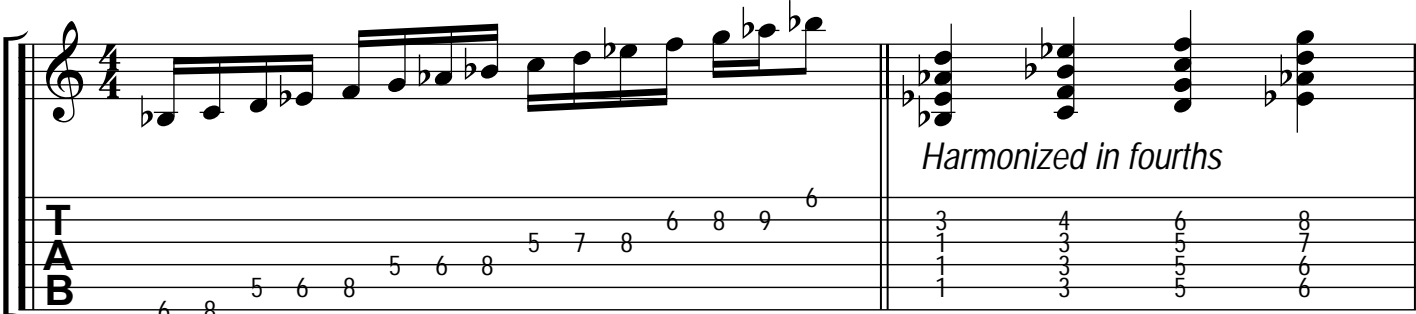
TAB
 11 11 10 13 12 10 11 10 8 8 7 7 6 5 5 10 8 8 6 5 5 4 3 3 3 2 1 8 7 6

B \flat 7 FOURTH VOICINGS

Harmonize a B \flat Mixolydian Scale in fourths
B \flat Mixolydian = Fifth mode of E \flat Major Scale

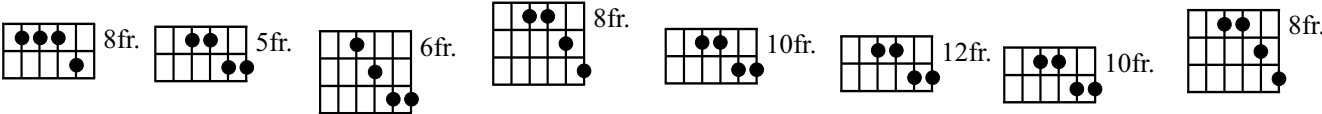
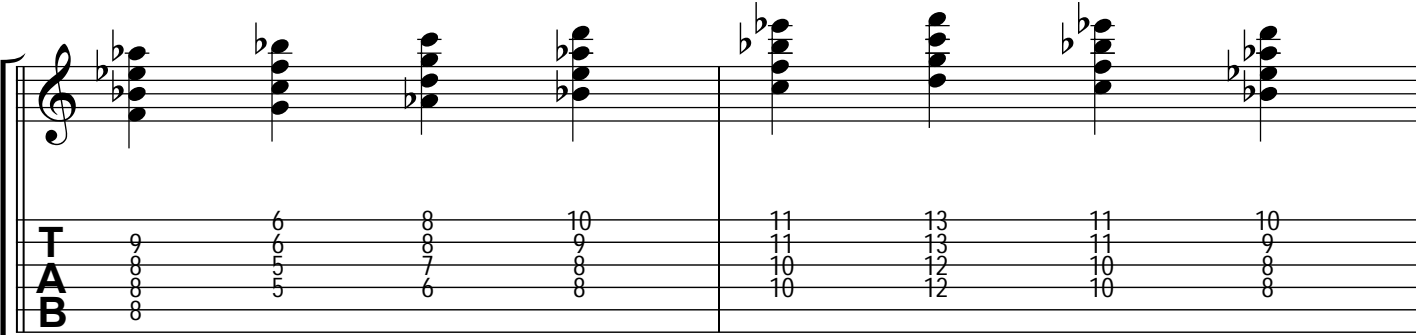
Ex. 11 B \flat 7 - comping fourth voicings (♩) # 12 - also use practice tracks 38 & 39

B \flat Mixolydian Scale (Major scale with $b7$)

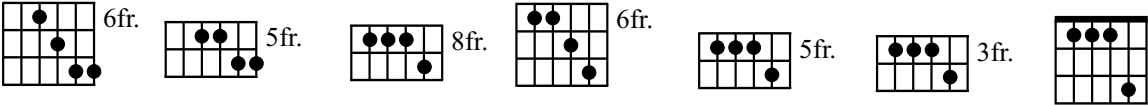
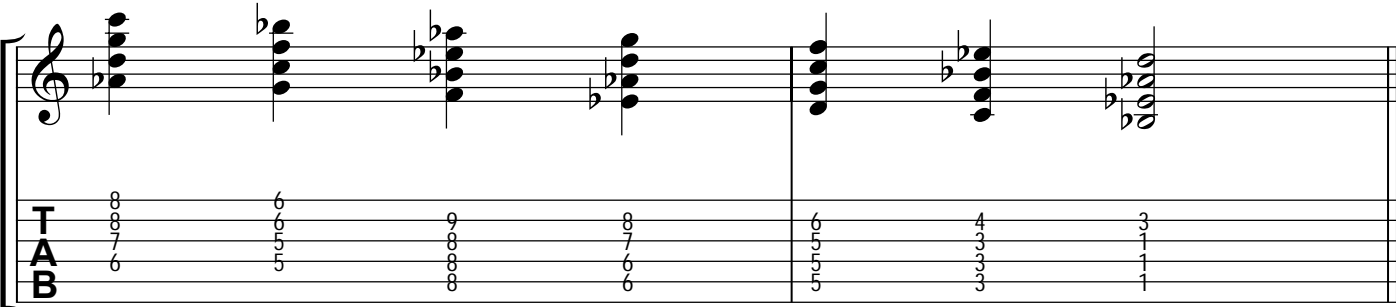



Harmonized in fourths

TAB: 6 8 5 6 8 5 7 8 6 8 9 6 | 3 4 6 8 | 1 3 5 7 | 1 3 5 6

TAB: 9 8 8 8 | 6 5 5 5 | 8 7 6 8 | 10 9 8 8 | 11 11 10 10 | 13 13 12 12 | 11 11 10 10 | 10 9 8 8

TAB: 8 7 6 6 | 6 5 5 5 | 9 8 8 8 | 8 7 6 6 | 6 5 5 5 | 4 3 3 3 | 6 5 5 5

Another technique used by modern jazz players is the use of melodic minor scales and modes. One very common practice is to use a melodic minor 1/2 step above the root of dominant seventh altered chords. For example, C7alt. = D \flat melodic minor, D7 alt. = E \flat melodic minor, etc. These melodic minor scales can be harmonized in fourths just like any other scale or mode. You might also consider this seventh melodic minor mode below to be the **altered scale**.

F7 alt. = F \sharp Melodic Minor Scale

Ex. 12 ● # 13

F7alt. = F \sharp Melodic Minor Scale in fourths

C7alt. = D \flat Melodic Minor Scale in fourths

Ex. 13

D \flat melodic minor - comping in fourths (●) #14

D7alt. = E \flat Melodic Minor Scale in fourths

Ex. 14

E \flat melodic minor - comping in fourths (●) #15

Now, some choruses of the blues in F using some of these fourth voicings.

Study No. 1 Blues in F - comping four-note fourth voicings

🎵 # 16 - also use practice tracks 36 & 37

	F⁷		B^b7		F⁷		F⁷alt	
	F Mixolydian		B ^b Mixolydian		F Mixolydian		F [#] Melodic minor	
T	4	8	6	9	8	6	5	9
A	3	7	5	8	7	6	4	9
B	3	6	5	8	6	5	4	7

	B^b7		B^b7		F⁷		D⁷alt	
	B ^b Mixolydian		B ^b Mixolydian		F Mixolydian		E ^b Melodic minor	
T	8	9	6	8	6	8	9	11
A	7	8	5	7	5	7	8	10
B	6	8	5	6	5	6	8	9

	Gmi⁷		C⁷alt		F⁷		C⁷alt		F⁷	
	G Dorian		D ^b Melodic minor		F Mixolydian		D ^b Melodic minor		F Mixolydian	
T	8	6	9	7	6	8	9	11	10	
A	7	6	8	6	5	7	8	9	8	
B	7	5	7	6	5	6	7	9	8	

It's got a thing. Some of the voicings have more weight than others. It takes some practice to improvise using these fourth voicings. It's important to remember that no matter what the voicing, the prime directive is a solid, well-considered time feel, regardless of style.

Study No. 2 Blues in F - comping four-note fourth voicings

🎵 # 17 - also use practice tracks 36 & 37

	F7		B\flat7		F7		F7alt	
	F Mixolydian		B \flat Mixolydian		F Mixolydian		F \sharp Melodic minor	
T	13	11	10	8	6	10	9	7
A	13	11	9	8	6	8	8	6
B	12	10	8	7	5	8	7	6
B	12	10	8	6	5	8	8	6

	B\flat7		B\flat7		F7		D7alt	
	B \flat Mixolydian		B \flat Mixolydian		F Mixolydian		E \flat Melodic minor	
T	6	8	9	6	8	10	11	13
A	5	7	8	5	8	10	11	13
B	5	6	8	5	7	8	10	11
B	5	6	8	5	7	8	10	12

	Gmi7		C7alt		F7		C7alt		F7	
	G Dorian		D \flat Melodic minor		F Mixolydian		D \flat Melodic minor		F Mixolydian	
T	12	10	9	8	6	10	9	7	6	
A	11	10	9	7	6	8	8	6	6	
B	10	9	8	6	5	8	8	6	5	
B	10	8	8	6	5	8	7	6	5	

Four voices in fourths can be somewhat unwieldy so one option is to remove a voice, stacking two fourth intervals instead of three.

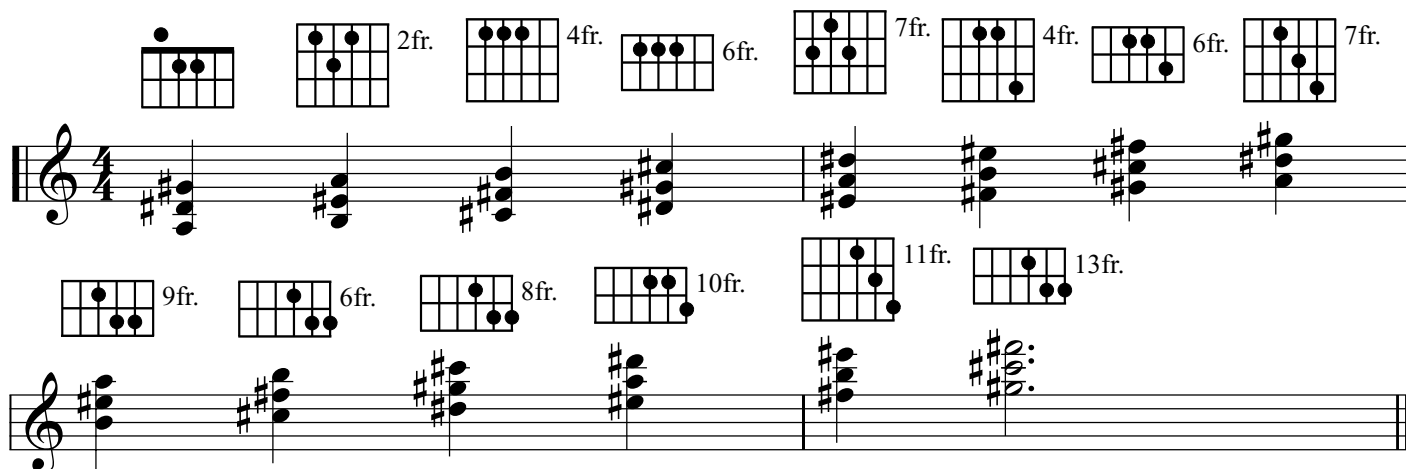
Stacking three voices in fourths

F Mixolydian scale

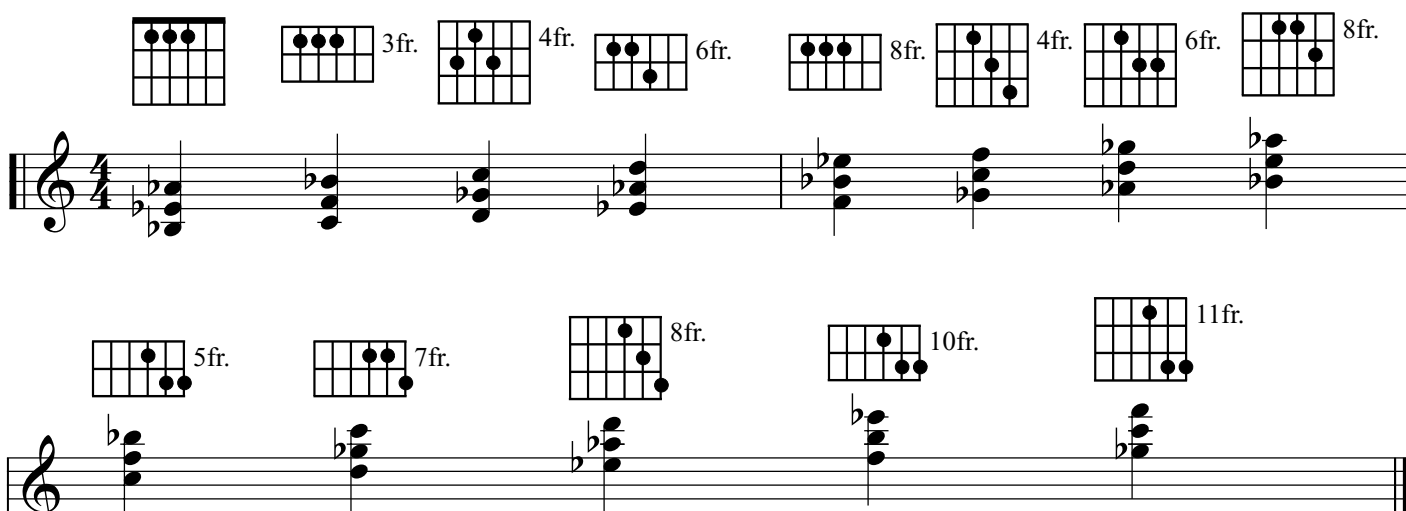
Ex. 15 *F Mixolydian - three-voice fourth chords* # 18

Ex. 16 *Bb Mixolydian - three-voice fourth chords* # 19

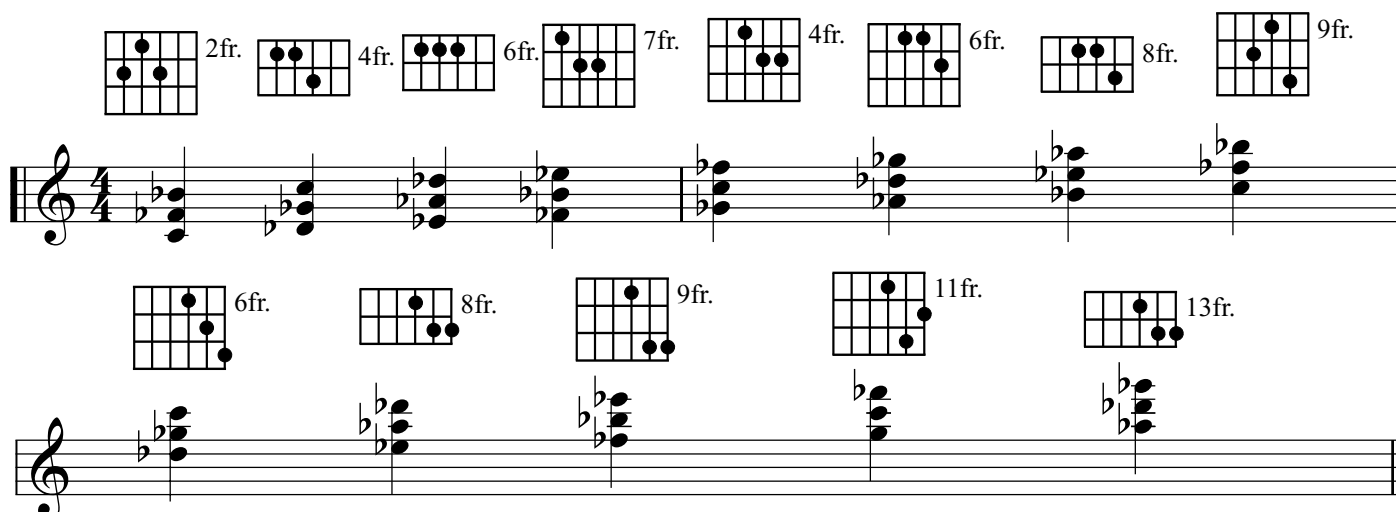
Ex. 17 *F# Melodic minor - three-voice fourth chords*  # 20



Ex. 18 *E♭ Melodic minor - three-voice fourth chords*  # 21



Ex. 19 *D♭ Melodic minor - three-voice fourth chords*  # 21



Study No. 3 Blues in F - comping three-note fourth voicings

🎵 # 20 - also use practice tracks 36 & 37

F7 **B \flat 7** **F7** **F7alt**

F Mixolydian *B \flat Mixolydian* *F Mixolydian* *F \sharp Melodic minor*

T 6 8 4 6 8 9 11
A 5 7 4 6 8 9 10
B 5 6 3 5 7 8 10

B \flat 7 **B \flat 7** **F7** **D7alt**

B \flat Mixolydian *B \flat Mixolydian* *F Mixolydian* *E \flat Melodic minor*

T 10 8 6 9 8 6 8
A 10 8 6 9 7 6 7
B 8 7 5 8 7 5 6

Gmi7 **C7alt** **F7** **C7alt** **F7**

G Dorian *D \flat Melodic minor* *F Mixolydian* *D \flat Melodic minor* *F Mixolydian*

T 5 7 6 8 6 8 9 6 8
A 5 7 6 8 5 7 8 6 7
B 5 7 6 7 5 7 8 5 7