**BASIC 12-BAR BLUES SONG FORM**

**chords: I (IV) I I**

**measures:** │/ / / / │/ / / /│/ / / /│/ / / /│

**melody: vocal line A . . . . . . . . . . . . instrumental . . .**

**chords: IV I I**

**measures:** │/ / / / │/ / / /│/ / / /│/ / / /│

**melody: vocal line A . . . . . . . . . . . . instrumental . . .**

**chords: V IV I I (V)**

**measures:** │/ / / / │/ / / /│/ / / /│/ / / /│

**melody: rhyming vocal line B . . . . instrumental (turnaround)**

**BLUE NOTES**

**In addition to song forms, such as the 8-, 12-, or 16-bar blues forms, the blues also refers to certain notes, most notably the lowered third, lowered fifth, and lowered seventh notes of the major scale in western Europe. Here are western approximations of the blue notes in the key of C:**



**Blue notes (in blue): ♭3, (♯4)/♭5, ♭7**

**Of these three notes, the most important by far is the lowered third. Entire blues melodies can be built around the lowered third (think of the Howlin' Wolf Song "A Spoonful"). Unfortunately, on the diatonic fretboard in a mixolydian tuning such as DAd or CGc, we do not have that lowered third. Partly for that reason, many people get the 1+ fret added, for that one fret gives us both the lowered third on the bass and melody strings and the lowered seventh on the middle string.**

**But without that extra fret, we can still find that lowered third. In the key of D, the third note of the major scale is F#. So we want to find a note lower than that F#. On the bass and melody strings, that F# is found in the second fret. We cannot lower a note by playing a string, but we can raise a note by bending a string. So one place to find that F natural is by bending one of those strings one fret below the major third, meaning in the first fret. Since it is much harder to bend a string by pushing it rather than pulling it, we can get that lowered third by bending the bass string at the first fret. With your index finger fretting the string just behind the first fret, pull the string toward you. It might be easier to do so by supporting your index finger with your middle and ring fingers, too.**

**Another place to find that lowered third, and one much easier to play, is on the middle string on the fourth fret. On the middle string we can find our tonic D on the third fret, which means the fourth fret is an E and the fifth an F#. Again, to get a note lower than that F# we have to bend the string one fret lower. So let's bend the middle string at the fourth fret in the same manner indicated above. You will get the feel of the bend if you let the music "resolve" to the D, in this case the middle string on the third fret. Position your fingers with your ring finger on the third fret and your middle and index finger on the fourth fret. Pluck the string and pull the string toward you. When you are ready to "resolve," your ringer finger is already on the middle string, so your fingers don't have to move at all.**