

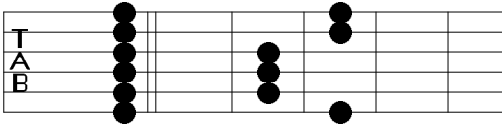
FRETBOARD VISUALIZATION.

Many of the people that come to me for coaching have already been playing guitar for a few years, which is usually long enough for them to say to themselves, "there must be more to it than this", and I tell there is.

Firstly, the Pentatonic scale that they already know can be put to use in other ways. If you take your Blues scale back three frets, you place it in a position where the Pentatonic scale now becomes a MAJOR MODE.

But first; you all must have this picture in your mind,

Ex. 1



Now when you play Ex. 1 at the V fret and you will have transposed the scale into the key of A.

We all have a picture in our mind of the area that we are playing over, the area that we are concentrating on. If we didn't, we wouldn't be able to play with our eyes closed. It's in our head.

Now Ex. 1 can be the Blues scale when positioned over an E shape chord, so if you want to play a Blues solo, you put this scale shape where the Tonic chord is, so if A the your tonic, it will be the E shape at the V fret and so on. With the Blues you are, by definition of the Blues, playing minor notes over major chords. And if you are playing the notes of A minor you must also be playing the notes for C major, the relative major of A minor.

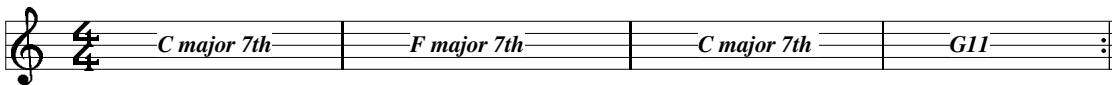
Now then, question.

What to do with that funky quasi jazz thing?

Well, if you take the E shape scale back three frets you will be in position for that minor scale to sound major. Of course only the accompaniment will prove this to you.

Try it over this chord sequence, Ex. 2. Play the E shape, back three frets from the VIII fret to the V fret.

Ex. 2



Set the rhythm going with your right hand, maybe a guitar playing buddy will play rhythm for you, and then you take a solo using the Pentatonic scale at the V fret.

The 'recipe' here is this; play the chord of the key that you are in as an E shape. Ex. 2 is in the key of C, so position yourself at the VIII fret, now move back three frets, this will now put you at the III fret, now you are in the position for the same Pentatonic scale shape to be played in a Major Mode.

The same applies to all of the keys. Of course you must know that the style of the song is leaning towards a jazzy feel for this recipe to work.

Find the Key chord as an E shape, move your barre back three frets and off you go.

Of course you can relate this to the A shape. This would be what I refer to as the original shape of A. Move it to the 3rd frets and it gives you the chord of C, now move the barre UP TWO frets and there again you have the position for your pentatonic in a major mode, in this case for the key of C major.

But with more complex chord sequences comes the need for more musically correct scales. They will be the major and minor diatonic scales.

So, personally, with different styles of music and different scales come different pictures in mine, and hopefully your mind.

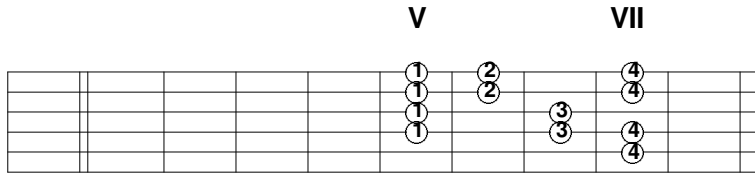
As you all know who have read my books, I only think in three chord and three scales. I

refer to my book, 'The Guitar, My Way', and if played correctly they will link together to give you control of the entire fretboard.

There is no one shape more important than the other because they all link together in my mind. I play over the shapes that are in mind, the scale is just the ammunition for my solo.

This is how I visualise shape no 1. I call it the C shape;

Ex. 3

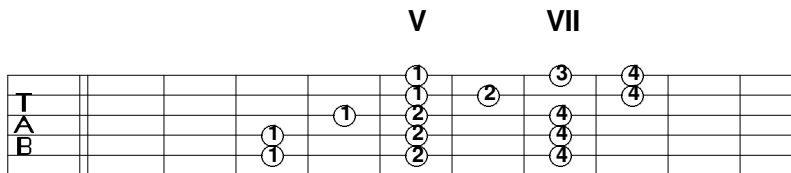


This would be my choice of the scale of F major in the middle of the fretboard, I think of it as the C shape at the V fret.

Now I must emphasise that this is the way that I finger my scales. You will find alternative fingering in other books, but I find those a little too static. Also, my fingering reflects on my early years of studying the classical guitar. I'm not afraid to stretch for a note or a chord.

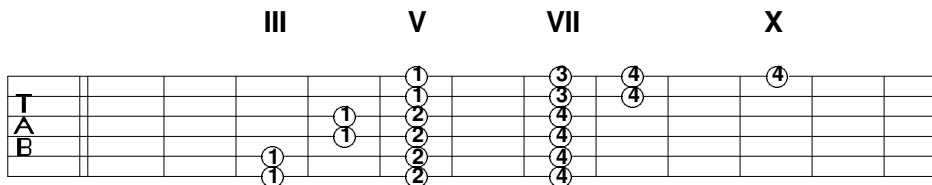
This is my second shape, I call it the A shape,

Ex. 4



This next scale, the E shape, is the last of the only three shapes enter my mind. It is the E shape at the III fret giving us the scale of G major.

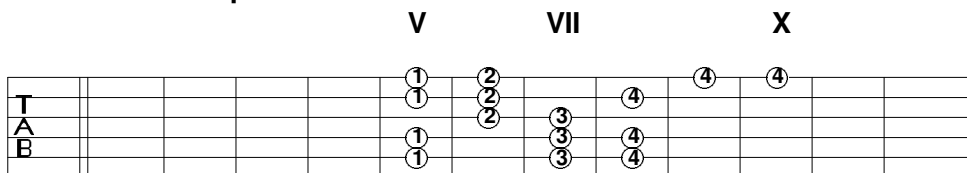
Ex. 5



That final slide up to the 10th fret with your little finger gets you at the top of the C shape at the VII fret, which is also the scale of G major. You can now see how I, and most better guitarists linking their scale shapes.

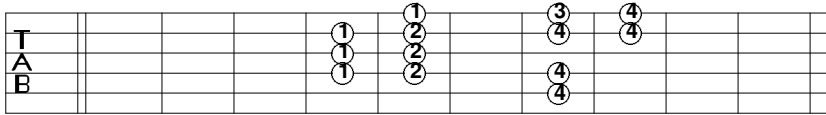
So these are the shapes in my mind for the Major scales, but of course there are the Minor ones, and I really only concentrate on the Minor Harmonic scales.

Ex. 6 The A shape as a Minor scale.

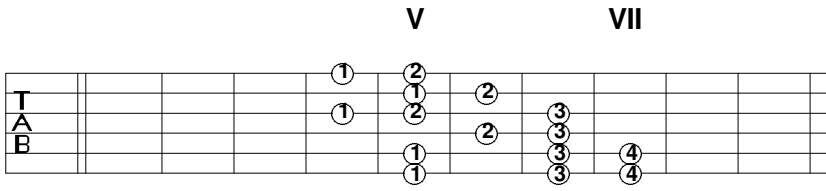


Ex. 7 The C shape as a Minor Harmonic.





Ex. 8 And finally the E shape as a Minor Harmonic.



You can always link scale shapes up how you like, it will depend on how your technique has developed and how you grow as a guitarist. Whatever happens, keep listening to everything. Sax players and flautists are a great source of encouragement because their instruments are so agile. If you can match any of the greats of these instruments your technique must be coming on in leaps and bounds. Keep practicing, and keep in touch.

J.A.