

3

A7 D7

three to get read - y, now go, cat go, but don't ___ you step on my blue _ suede

7

A7 E9

shoes. You can do an - y - thing, _ but lay off _

10

A7

___ of my blue ___ suede shoes. 1. Well, you can

Figure 2–Verse and Chorus 2

There is a striking similarity to the harmonic arrangement of “Blue Suede Shoes” and Muddy Waters’ performance of the Willie Dixon composition, “Hoochie Coochie Man” from 1954. In the verse, both tunes vamp on the I chord in stop-time for eight measures before advancing to the IV chord (presented in the chorus for “Blue Suede Shoes”) and completing the expected blues changes. Do not miss that Perkins substitutes boogie-type 5ths and 6ths in the stop-time of measures 1–8 (played in 4/4, not 6/4 time!) as opposed to the 5ths with an octave in measures 1–4 on the chorus/intro.

Verse

1 A5 N.C. A6 A5 N.C. A6 A5 N.C. A6 A5

knock me down, - step in my face, - slan - der my name - all -

4 N.C. A6 A5 N.C. A6 A5 N.C. A6 A5

o - ver the place, - and do an - y - thing - - - that you wan - na do, - but

7 N.C. A7 A5 B5 C#5 Chorus D7

uh - uh, hon - ey, lay off - - of my shoes, and don't - - you step on my blue suede

11 A E9

shoes. You can do an - y - thing, - but lay off - - of my blue - suede

Figure 3—Guitar Solo

Perkins romps with enthusiasm over standard 12-bar changes in his first solo as he swings eighth notes left and right. The blues scale with the crucial addition of the major 3rd (C#) along with the 6th (F#) from the Mixolydian mode (used discriminantly) in the root position at fret 5 is his improvisational tool of choice, and he handles it well. In measures 1–4 (l) he opens with a spanky dyad of a 4th (A/E) favored by Chuck Berry, among others, followed by scale tones highlighting the root (A), ♭7th (G), and ♭5th (enharmonically

D \sharp) and the 5th (E). Dig that the crazy hammer on from the \flat 5th to the 5th followed by the A/E dyad in measures 3–5 was a fave of duck-tailed rockers and has long roots back to the blues of T-Bone Walker and the jazz of Charlie Christian in the 1940s. Though no theoretician, Perkins probably knew from his blues experience that the dyad of E/C (\flat 7th and 9th of D) would be just too cool over the IV (D) chord in measures 7 and 8. When he returns to the I chord in measures 9 and 10 he pretty much sticks to the program of the A/E dyad and the bluesy \flat 7th (G) notes, but that insertion of C/G (\flat 7th and \flat 3rd) on beat 4 of measure 9 is a real ear-tickler that creates musical tension before the resolution back to the root (A) note in measure 10.

In measures 11 and 12 of the V (E) chord Perkins tends to repeat the E/C dyad from the IV chord in measures 7 and 8. However, in this context the notes function as the funky \flat 6th and root. When combined with the A note (the sus 4th of E) a goodly amount of tension is created before resolution to—what else?—A/E in measures 13 and 14 (I). Check out the inclusion of the major tonality-defining major 3rd (C \sharp) in combination with the jazzy 6th (F \sharp) in measure 14. Have mercy!

Perkins once described his style (as quoted in *Good Rockin' Tonight* by Colin Escott and Martin Hawkins) as, "I just speeded up some of the slow blues licks. I put a little speed and rhythm to what Uncle John had slowed down. That's all." Great artists such as Perkins take their influences, particularly the never-ending wellspring of the blues, and combine them with their creativity and soul to produce new art that also pays respectful homage to its sources.

Performance Tip: For the \flat 5th to the 5th move in measures 3–5, hammer on from the ring finger to the pinky while accessing the A/E dyad with your index finger.

5

6

Full Band

Slow Demo
Gtr. 1 meas. 1-14

Fig. 3

Guitar Solo
A

1

shoes.

6

D9

A

11

E7

A

2. Well, you can