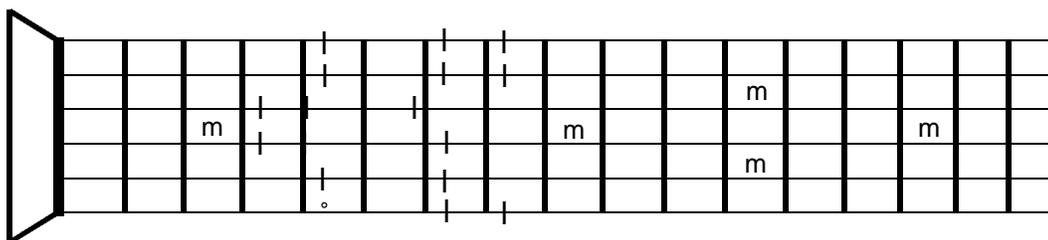


UNDERSTANDING THE MAJOR SCALE MODES

What are; “Major Scale Modes?”

Intermediate guitar players often struggle with the idea of these, “other scales,” found within the major scale referred to as, “Modes of the Major Scale.” Yet, these same students have no problems understanding the concept of the, “Relative Minor Scale,” found off of the 6th degree of the Major scale. Modes are nothing more than playing the Major scale from each of it’s other steps. See example #1.

Ex. 1). The 2nd step Mode, “Dorian” (The “A Dorian Scale is given below)



The example above shows the pattern for a sixth string root Dorian mode. This mode is, “Minor,” in tonality. *It can be used in the following situations:

- Over a minor progression which contains a major 6th interval relative to the I chord’s Root. For example: ||: Ami7 / / / | D9 / / / :|| *The 3rd of “D9” is a Ma6th to the “Ami7”*
- Over a, “Non-Functioning,” minor chord in a progression. “Non-Functioning” = “Non-Diatonic”
- Over a minor chord which contains a major 6th interval.
For Example; “Ami6,” or, “Ami13.” - 6th intervals added to minor chords are Major against the root.

* *There are other ways to use Dorian, however they require the musician to have the ability to phrase well with Dorian scale. This requires working with the mode over time to develop a series of licks and ideas which will lead the player to that level of skill.*

Dorian Review Questions:

Check mark the correct answer.

- 1). What degree of the major scale gives us the Dorian Mode? 4th____ 2nd____ 6th____
- 2). If you needed an, “F Dorian Mode,” which major scale gives this Mode? A____ Eb____
- 3). Can we play “G Dorian” Mode over a “G13” chord? YES ____ NO ____
- 4). Is “C Dorian” good over these chords: ||: Cmi7 / / / | F9 / / / :|| YES ____ NO ____
- 5). Can “Ab Dorian” work over an “Abmi6” chord? YES ____ NO ____

The Modes can be divided into two categories:

MAJOR MODES:

Ionian *Basic Major Scale*

Lydian

Mixolydian

MINOR MODES:

Dorian

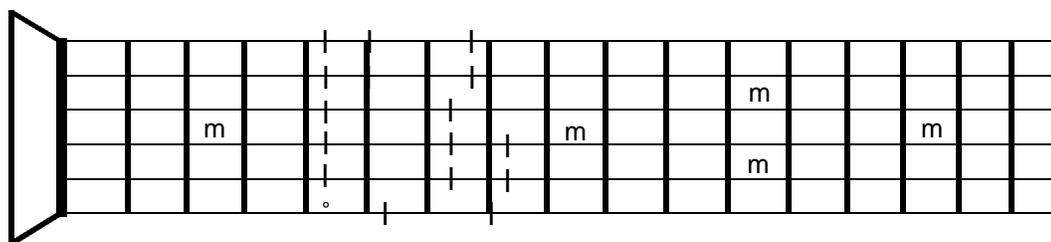
Phrygian

Aeolian *The Natural Minor Scale*

Locrian *(Not Covered in this handout)*

These two categories are important to how and when we use the modes. For example, the next Mode we will look at will be the “Phrygian.” This Mode is built off of the Major Scales 3rd degree. Look at example #2 below...

Example #2). The 3rd step Mode, “Phrygian Mode.” (The “A Phrygian” is given below)



The example above shows the pattern for a sixth string root Phrygian mode. This mode is, “Minor,” in tonality. *It can be used in the following situations:

- Over a minor progression which contains a minor 2nd interval relative to the I chord's Root. For example: ||: Ami7 / / / | Bbma7 / / / :|| *The root of “Bbma7” is a Mi2nd of the “Ami7”*
- Over a, “Non-Functioning,” 3rd inversion of a Ma7 chord in a progression.
- Over a minor chord which contains a minor 2nd interval.
For Example; “Ami7(b9).”

* *There are other ways to use Phrygian, however they require the musician to have the ability to phrase well with the scale. This requires working with the mode over time to develop a series of licks and ideas which will lead the player to that level of skill.*

Phrygian Review Questions:

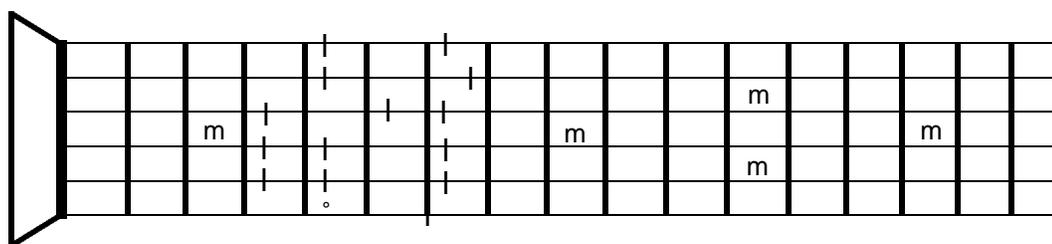
Check mark the correct answer.

- 1). What degree of the major scale gives us this Mode? 6th____ 3rd____ 7th____
- 2). If you needed, “E Phrygian,” which major scale gives this Mode? Gb____ C____
- 3). Can we play, “F Phrygian,” Mode over a, “Bb7,” chord? YES ____ NO ____
- 4). Will, “G Phrygian,” work here: ||: Gmi7 / / / | Fmi7 / / / :|| YES ____ NO ____
- 5). Would, “C Phrygian,” work over a, “C/B,” chord? YES ____ NO ____

Each mode will create a new colour over a major or minor chord progression. This change can be better controlled with more practice from the musician. As greater skills with the modes are developed, the musician can influence modal sounds in a wide variety of playing situations. An example of this can be found in the works of Jimi Hendrix. He often used both Dorian and Phrygian against the minor pentatonic scale. His use was sparse and subtle, with most of his phrases coming from the minor pentatonic and the blues scales. However, when learning the solo's to his biggest hit tunes, these modal notes are particularly artful in their appearance.

Our next modal ideas will come from the Major Tonality. Below you will find the most common jazz scale used against the Dominant chord, the "Mixolydian Mode."

Example #3). The 5th step Mode, "Mixolydian." (The "A Mixolydian" is given below)



The example above shows the pattern for a sixth string root Mixolydian mode. This mode is, "Major," in tonality. *It can be used in the following situations:

- Over a Major progression which contains a minor 7th interval relative to the I chord's Root. For example: ||: A9 / / / | G / / / :|| The "A9" contains a Mi7th & "G" is a Mi7 from "A"
- Over a, "Non-Functioning," Dominant 7th chord in a progression.
- Over any major triad with an alt. bass-note a major 2nd away from the triads root. For Example; "F/ G," also sometimes notated as; "G11," or, "G9(sus)."

* There are other ways to use Mixolydian, however they require the musician to have the ability to phrase well with the scale. This requires working with the mode over time to develop a series of licks and ideas which will lead the player to that level of skill.

Mixolydian Review Questions:

Check mark the correct answer.

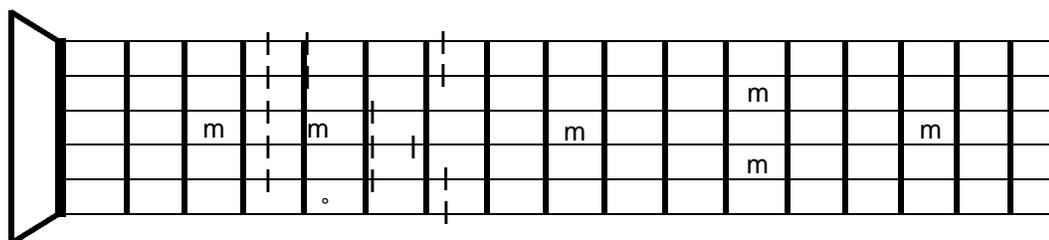
- 1). What degree of the major scale gives us this Mode? Root____ 4th____ 5th____
- 2). If you needed, "E Mixolydian," which major scale gives this Mode? F#____ A____
- 3). Can we play, "G Mixolydian," Mode over a, "G11," chord? YES ____ NO ____
- 4). Will, "C Mixolydian," work here: ||: C / / / | Bb/C / / / :|| YES ____ NO ____
- 5). Would, "A Mixolydian," work over an, "Ami9," chord? YES ____ NO ____

Modes such as Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian and Lydian, are another tonal colour of performance with the major scales once the advancing guitarist reaches a level of applying the use of the basic major and minor scales, (known as the, "Ionian," and, "Aeolian," modes).

Study each of the modes across the entire fretboard. Study them from each root, and use play-a-long "Jam Trax," to refine your ability to phrase with them. It is strongly recommended that students search out several instructional books and videos about modes to hear other musicians discuss how to use them in several different musical situations.

Our final modal idea will complete Major Tonality. Below you will find the most common scale used against, "Non-Functioning Ma7th chords", the; "Lydian Mode."

Example #4). The 4th step Mode, "Lydian." (The "A Lydian Mode" is given below)



The example above shows the pattern for a sixth string root Lydian mode. This mode is, "Major," in tonality. *It can be used in the following situations:

- Over a Major progression which contains a raised 4th interval relative to the I chord's Root. For example: ||: C / / / | D7 / / / :|| *The Ma3rd of "D7" is a raised 4th relative to "C" root.*
- Over a, "Non-Functioning," Major 7th chord in a progression.
- Over any major 7th chord with a raised 4th, or, (11th).
For Example; "Cma7(#11)."

** There are other ways to use Lydian, however they do require the musician to have the ability to phrase well with the scale. This requires working with the mode over time to develop a series of licks and ideas which will lead the player to that level of skill.*

Lydian Review Questions:

Check mark the correct answer.

- 1). What degree of the major scale gives us this Mode? 7th____ 3rd____ 4th____
- 2). If you needed, "A Lydian," which major scale gives this Mode? Bb____ E____
- 3). Can we play, "F Lydian," Mode over an, "F7(#9)," chord? YES ____ NO ____
- 4). Will, "G Lydian," work here: ||: G / / / | A/G / / / :|| YES ____ NO ____
- 5). Would, "C Lydian," work over a, "Dma7(#11) YES ____ NO ____