



The Modal System

by John Falstrom

Intro: The Modal System is the "answer" to understanding what music theory is and also the "answer" to the definition of what the word "Key" is all about.

The Modal System

- * The modes are seven scales that are played on the seven chords in the major key(s) and the seven chords in the natural minor key(s).
- * Each mode has seven different notes in it. The 8th (octave) note in each mode is the same note letter as its 1st (root) note.
- * By playing each mode on its assigned chord(s), all seven different notes in each mode will remain in the major and relative natural minor key(s).

History: The modes were constructed by using the seven different natural notes; each natural note being the root of its own scale.

(The major scale and the natural minor scale are both taken from the modal system. This is why the C major scale and the A natural minor scale have all natural notes in them.)

	<u>The Mode Names</u>	<u>Original Scale Constructions</u>
		R 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1)	Ionian	w w h w w w h C D E F G A B C
2)	Dorian	w h w w w h w D E F G A B C D
3)	Phrygian	h w w w h w w E F G A B C D E
4)	Lydian	w w w h w w h F G A B C D E F
5)	Mixolydian	w w h w w h w G A B C D E F G
6)	Aeolian	w h w w h w w A B C D E F G A
7)	Locrian	h w w h w w w B C D E F G A B



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Here are the modes and their scale types:

<u>Mode</u>	<u>Scale Type</u>
1) Ionian	The major scale.
2) Dorian	Like natural minor scale but with a major 6th note.
3) Phrygian	Like natural minor scale but with a minor (b)2nd note.
4) Lydian	Like major scale but with an augmented (#)4th note.
5) Mixolydian	Like major scale but with a minor (b)7th note.
6) Aeolian	The natural minor scale.
7) Locrian	Like natural minor scale but with a minor (b)2nd note and a diminished (b)5th note.



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Here are the assigned chords to play each mode on:

	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Major Keys</u>	<u>Relative Natural Minor Keys</u>
1)	Ionian	The I Chord	The bIII Chord
2)	Dorian	The ii Chord	The iv Chord
3)	Phrygian	The iii Chord	The v Chord
4)	Lydian	The IV Chord	The bVI Chord
5)	Mixolydian	The V Chord	The bVII Chord
6)	Aeolian	The vi Chord	The i Chord
7)	Locrian	The viio Chord	The iio Chord

Summary:

You should study/play/ and (eventually) memorize the modes for all 15 Major Keys and all 15 Relative Natural Minor Keys in Circle of Fifths order.

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