

THE SECRET TO IMPROVISATION

The secret to improvisation is playing notes that are either contained in or suggested by the chord structure of a piece of music that communicates a melodic line. You do this with arpeggios and modes. With practice anyone can do this. The key is learning the notes that make up the chord and the modes that go with it. Anyone can do it, but it will require practice, lots of practice.

To arpeggiate and play modes of any chord while keeping up with the chord changes of an up tempo song is a wonderful accomplishment. It's what you do as an improviser. It is the goal of this book to turn you in to one.

WORKING WITH MODES

The chart in the following section shows the modes used in this book. Each mode is extend to the sixth note of the second octave. Under the mode is a list (sometimes a list of one) of chords that "fit" the mode. For instance, the position of the notes of a dominant7#5#9 fit the super Locrian mode. This chord would also fit the Mixolydian b6 and Locrian modes. As mentioned earlier a chord can go with several modes. However, for the sake of simplicity this book has picked only one pairing of chord and mode.

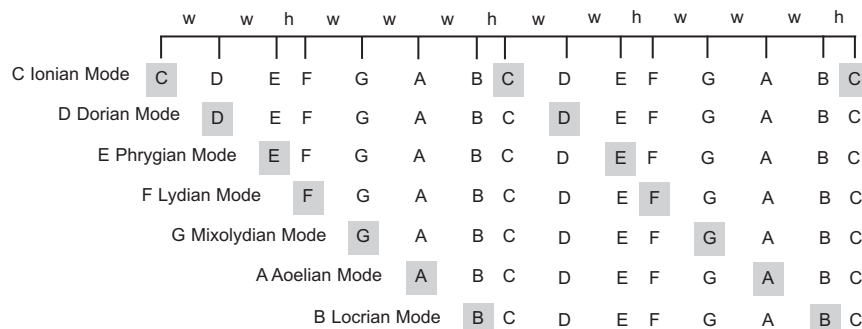
WHERE MODES COME FROM?

The modes of this book are derived from these scales:

Diatonic
Melodic Minor
Diminished h/w
Diminished w/h
Whole Tone
Blues

There are many more scales than this in existence, but these are the most common ones. It's hard to make a clear distinction between modes and scales. Basically, scales are called scales out of convention and habit.

Of these the diatonic scale is the most common. This is the do-ra-me-fa-so-la-ti-do scale. If someone says "this song is in C major," they are meaning "this song utilizes the diatonic scale with the root note being C." There are seven modes that are derived from the diatonic scale. Each these seven modes uses the same notes that make up the scale but start on a different note. This is easily shown below.



This diagram shows the seven modes of the C diatonic scale.

NOTE: C Ionian mode is the first mode of the C diatonic scale and is identical to the C major scale.