

Mode-Writing Practice For Dorian and Mixolydian Modes

There are two approaches in figuring out how to write-out a mode; one that uses major scales and another that modifies a given major or minor scale.

Using a related major scale

The Dorian mode goes from the 2nd scale degree to the 2nd scale degree of a major scale, so it can be thought of as a "relative" scale to a given major scale. For example, a G Dorian scale can be thought of as the relative Dorian to F major because G is the 2nd scale degree of F. The notes in a G Dorian scale are the same as those in an F major scale (just starting on a different note):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
F major:	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F
G Dorian:	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F	G

The Mixolydian mode goes from the 5th scale degree to the 5th scale degree of a major scale, so it can also be thought of as a relative scale to a given major scale. For example, an F Mixolydian scale can be thought of as the relative Mixolydian of Bb major because F is the 5th scale degree of Bb. The notes in an F Mixolydian scale are the same as those in a Bb major scale (just starting on a different note):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Bb major:	Bb	C	D	Eb	F	G	A	Bb
F Mixolydian:	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	Eb	F

Using a parallel major or minor scale

The Dorian mode can also be thought of as a "conventional" natural minor scale with a raised 6th scale degree. Start with writing out a natural minor scale and then raise the 6th ("↑6") scale degree a half step:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
G natural minor:	G	A	Bb	C	D	Eb	F	G
G Dorian:	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F	G
					↑6			

The Mixolydian mode can also be thought of as a "conventional" major scale with a lowered 7th scale degree. Start with writing out a major scale and then lower the 7th ("↓7") scale degree a half step:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
F major:	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F
F Mixolydian:	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	Eb	F
						↓7		