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ELLEN FINISHES UP HER EXPLORATION OF CHORD EXTENSIONS FOR BEGINNERS

Hello again bass buddies! Over the last few months we have been getting acquainted with the fretboard by getting to know the note names all over the neck. We've built up our knowledge of chords and their extensions and we have also looked at the major and minor scales. This month I want to take us back to the scales – but this time we will look at their alter-egos, the modes.

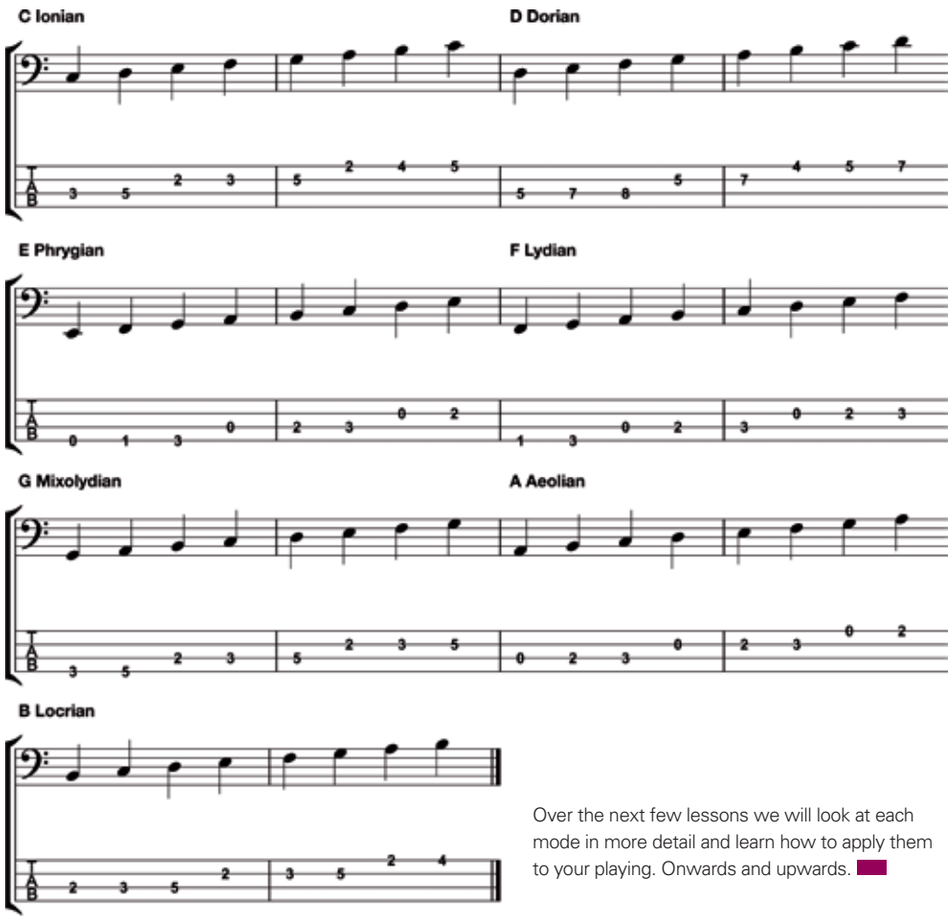
I remember being blown away years ago by a bassist who took a solo at a gig and wondering how he played so melodically without hitting bum notes, so I went up and asked him. All he said was 'Learn your modes!' That was the beginning of me trying to come to grips with a concept that, if inadequately explained, can leave you incredibly confused. I remember being so lost trying to find books, people and resources on the web to help me understand it – but to no avail, until I set foot into the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance. With the next few columns I want to share what I learned about modes there.

First of all, you have already learned two of the modes. The major scale is also known as the Ionian mode and the (natural) minor scale is also known as the Aoelian mode. There are seven modes in major harmony: they correspond with the seven degrees of the major scale and chords as follows:

Degree of major scale	Chord of harmonised major scale	Mode
1st degree	major7	Ionian (major)
2nd degree	minor7	Dorian
3rd degree	minor7	Phrygian
4th degree	major7	Lydian
5th degree	dominant7	Mixolydian
6th degree	minor7	Aoelian (minor)
7th degree	minor7b5	Locrian

Simply put, modes are just a way of playing a scale in a particular key, starting on a different degree of that scale. For example, if you're in the key of C major and you play C to C, then you are playing the Ionian mode, but if you play D to D, then you are playing the Dorian mode. See **Example 1.**

Key of C major
Starting on 1st degree C D E F G A B C
Starting on 2nd degree D E F G A B C D
Starting on 3rd degree E F G A B C D E
Starting on 4th degree F G A B C D E F
Starting on 5th degree G A B C D E F G
Starting on 6th degree A B C D E F G A
Starting on 7th degree B C D E F G A B



Over the next few lessons we will look at each mode in more detail and learn how to apply them to your playing. Onwards and upwards.