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BEGINNER'S GURU ELLEN MAKES MODES EASY FOR EVERYONE

Hey bass friends! Welcome back to my beginner's theory column. This month we will be revisiting the mysterious land of modes, with extra tips that have played a part in helping me to understand them. I've said before that it's better to think in terms of formulas and the sound of each scale rather than patterns when it comes to scales, and in this sense it's handy to look at the patterns as they will solidify in your mind how all the modes, arpeggios and chords fit together.

Have a look at the table below, which illustrates my point about the scales, all fitting together like a jigsaw. Above Ionian is Lydian; directly below Ionian is Mixolydian and so on.

Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian	Locrian
Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian	Locrian	Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian
Locrian	Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian

Understanding this can help you learn linearly which will help open up the fretboard for you. Once you come to grips with this idea, you will then be able to see all the modes almost like a grid, jigsaw or road map cast over the neck, showing you all the notes at your disposal in a given key. When you change the key, then you just move the grid: in other words,

move it so that Ionian starts at the root note of the major key you wish to play in. All the other modes will then fall into place. For example, if you are playing in Bb major (Bb Ionian would be the mode), which gives you C Dorian and so on, change the key to D major and you will have E Dorian, F# Phrygian and so on.

Mode	Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian	Locrian
Triad	Major	minor	minor	Major	Major	minor	minor
7 Chord	Maj7	min7	min7	Maj7	Dom7	min7	min7b5

The image displays musical notation for various modes on a bass guitar. Each mode is shown with its name and key signature above the staff. The notation includes the scale notes and fret numbers on the strings. The modes shown are: F Ionian, Bb Lydian, G Dorian, C Mixolydian, A Phrygian, D Aeolian, Bb Lydian, E Locrian, C Mixolydian, F Ionian, D Aeolian, G Dorian, E Locrian, and A Phrygian.

Last month we looked at how each mode is related to a specific chord, and as you will recall, an arpeggio is just a chord played one note after another – in other words, melodically. Below is a table showing which chords, triads and arpeggios fit into which mode. Can you see the patterns emerging? You'll see in the components of each mode why they go with certain chords. Bear in mind, as explained in previous lessons, there are major- and minor-sounding modes.

Try the following exercises, where you start playing a mode, let's say G Dorian. Continue playing above until you are playing C Mixolydian. Try this for all the modes using the guidelines in the first table, when you'll begin to see the net. Practise until you are able to visualise it every time you look at the fretboard. Good luck! ■

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