

Modes

An introduction:

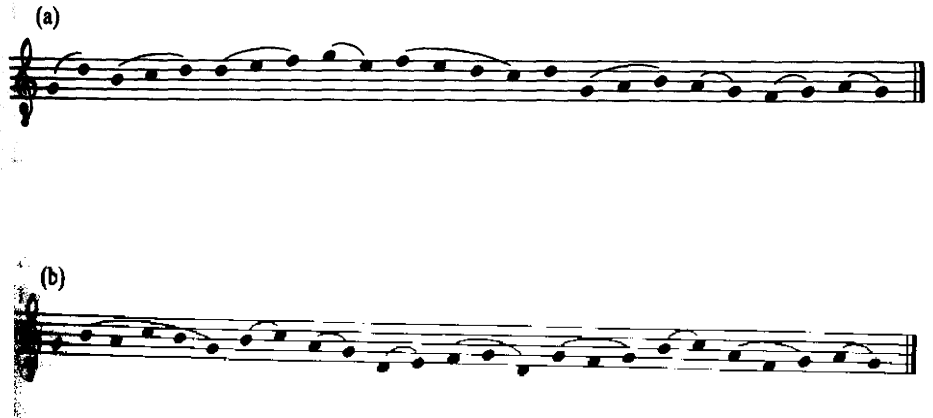
A major key and a minor key with the same key-note are said to be different 'modes' of the same key. The roots of Western music lies in the chants sung in the services of the early Church. These were the earliest types of PLAINSONG. Medieval theorists divided plainsongs into different categories or modes. Because the modes originally applied to the Church music they are sometimes called Church modes. It is important to remember that modes were initially concerned with melodies (unaccompanied).

Modes exist in two forms, **authentic** and **plagal**. The plagal mode always lies a perfect 4th below the authentic mode (or a perfect 5th above). Plagal modes were

Authentic Modes	Plagal Modes	Mode Number	Range	Final	Tenor or Dominant
Dorian		1	D - D	D	A
	Hypodorian	2	A - A	D	F
Phrygian		3	E - E	E	C
	Hypophrygian	4	B - B	E	A
Lydian		5	F - F	F	C
	Hypo Lydian	6	C - C	F	A
Mixolydian		7	G - G	G	D
	Hypomixolydian	8	D - D	G	C
Aeolian		9	A - A	A	E
	Hypoaeolian	10	E - E	A	C
Ionian		11	C - C	C	G
	Hypoionian	12	G - G	C	E

Examining the modes

Let us examine Mode 1, Dorian, and Mode 2, Hypodorian. Mode 1 is authentic: it has the fourth above the fifth. The reciting tone is A (the dominant note). Mode 2, Hypodorian, is plagal: the fourth above the fifth. Its reciting note is F. The final notes of both modes is D



Example (a) opens with a fifth G - D and establishes a reciting note of D. It fills out the upper fourth of the mode, D - G, and its final is G. What mode is this melody in?

Example (b) also opens and cadences on G, has a reciting note of C, and centres on the fourth D - G below the final. What is the correct mode?

(a) Mixolydian
(b) Hypomixolydian
Answers

Tips to remember

A melody does not have to stay in the same mode. It may start in one mode and cadence into another. The modes may be closely related, such as the authentic and plagal on the same final note. The transition from one mode to another can be extremely subtle if the modes share certain characteristics. Mode 1 and Mode 8, for example, have the same range. Their differences lie in their reciting notes, A and C respectively, and in their finals. The final of Mode 1 is D; the final of Mode 8 is G. a melody can move fairly easily, therefore from mode 1 to 8.

Modes can also be transposed. This does not change the modal design to change, even though the names of the notes may be different, for the relationship between the notes will be the same.

Look at the notes that the melody starts and finishes on and then try and work out the reciting tone. What is the interval between These two notes?

For example a melody may start and finish on A. It uses the notes A Bb (usually in the mode when transposed), C D E F G. The reciting note is F. The interval between A and F = 6th. Therefore the melody is in Mode 3, Phrygian, transposed to A. This is because the interval between E and C = 6th.

Sometimes it is not this clear so you may have to play the possible modes through to see which one sounds the most correct.