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METHODS

There are two methods:

1. DIATONIC METHOD

The traditional method: that of establishing a key center and transposing the adjacent notes of the major scale. The modes are diatonically related, with no clear color comparison.

2. CHROMATIC METHOD

Fixed starting note method: this is a nondiatonic method where each mode has the same starting note. The modes are constructed by the combination of tetrachords that clarifies the differences in modality, stability and harmonic/melodic qualities.

The main goal of this section is to establish a harmonic palette for the composer of modal compositions to use in a manner similar to that of the visual artist. The “colors” are to be bright or dark, tense or relaxed, and to have emotional effects as well. With this in mind the chromatic method is the best choice.

The six scales from which the harmonic material in this book will be derived are the following:

1. Ionian mode
2. Ionian $b3$ (melodic minor)
3. Ionian $b6$ (harmonic major)
4. Ionian $b3, b6$ (harmonic minor)
5. Ionian $b3, \#5$ (melodic minor $\#5$)
6. Ionian $\#2$

TETRACHORDS¹⁾

There are two groups: *diatonic* and *chromatic*

1. **DIATONIC:** Follows an alphabetical sequence, with no enharmonic spellings.
2. **CHROMATIC:** Alphabetic sequence with enharmonic spellings.

| DIATONIC | SEMITONES | CHROMATIC | SEMITONES |
|----------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| Lydian | 2 2 2 | Hungarian major | 3 1 2 |
| Ionian | 2 2 1 | Hungarian minor | 2 1 3 |
| Dorian | 2 1 2 | Harmonic | 1 3 1 |
| Phrygian | 1 2 2 | Spanish Phrygian | 1 2 1 |

Example 2-1:

1) A 4-note scale fragment having its own modal quality.

THE DIATONIC MODES (UNALTERED IONIAN)

Using the chromatic or fixed starting note method, the modes are created by combining two tetrachords, each with its own modality, into a resulting merged modality with its own qualities of brightness/darkness, resolution tendencies, and harmonic/melodic definition.

These results should be met:

1. The sum of the semitones equals 12.
2. There are seven different scale steps.
3. They are all contained within an octave.

THE FORMULAS

| MODE | TETRACHORDS | SEMITONES | CONNECTOR |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Lydian | Lydian & Ionian | 222 & 221 | 1 |
| Ionian | Ionian & Ionian | 221 & 221 | 2 |
| Mixolydian | Ionian & Dorian | 221 & 212 | 2 |
| Dorian | Dorian & Dorian | 212 & 212 | 2 |
| Aeolian | Dorian & Phrygian | 212 & 122 | 2 |
| Phrygian | Phrygian & Phrygian | 122 & 122 | 2 |
| Locrian | Phrygian & Lydian | 122 & 222 | 1 |

Note the shifting of the minor second interval from the right to the left. This is a visual representation of the order of *brightest* to *darkest* of the modes.

Example 2-2: The Unaltered Diatonic Modes

Lydian Ionian Mixolydian

2 2 2 (1)* 2 2 1 2 2 1 (2) 2 2 1 2 2 1 (2) 2 1 2

Dorian Aeolian Phrygian

2 1 2 (2) 2 1 2 2 1 2 (2) 1 2 2 1 2 2 (2) 1 2 2

Locrian

1 2 2 (1) 2 2 2

*) Note that in order for the semitones to add up to 12, another interval must be added to the formula, either a semitone or a whole tone. This will be called the *connector* or *connecting* tone and is found between the upper and lower tetrachord.

SUGGESTED EXERCISES

1. Construct the following modes using the tetrachord method (do not use key signatures):

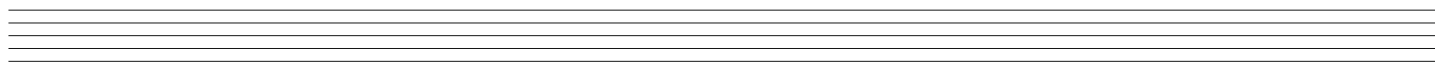
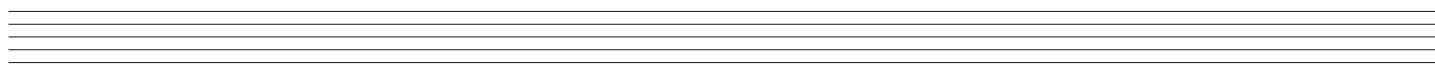
- (a) D Ionian
- (b) F Aeolian
- (c) E \flat Locrian
- (d) G Phrygian
- (e) B \flat Lydian
- (f) D \flat Mixolydian
- (g) E Dorian

2. Try to construct a tetrachord not listed in the text.

3. Try unusual combinations of the given tetrachords.

4. Play the tetrachords, learn to identify them by ear.

5. Do the above for the modes, make note of their emotional quality.



5. THE LIEB¹⁾ – RON MILLER, 1984

This composition, written for saxophonist/composer David Liebman, is representative of the plateau modal category with a vertical modal bridge. The emphasized modality is Aeolian, with a medium tempo; the overall mood is dark romanticism. This tune could be described as American ECM.

Example 11-9:

COMMENTS

This being a plateau modal composition, the only significant harmonic movement is in the bridge, which is vertical modal.

A. BASS MELODY

CHORD:

- 1-2 two plateaus of Aeolian, a whole tone apart, the downward change creates more darkness, a tritone skip down to next chord creates tension
- 4-5 tritone skip, inversion of 2-3
- 3-8 a general upward trend, preparing to set up a point of climax
- 7-8 sequence of 5-6
- 9-12 a definite transition area, the movement is faster, upward, following a Dorian tetachord
- 12-13 the normal resolution here is for the melody to resolve up a semitone, the skip is unexpected

B. TOP MELODY

CHORD:

- 1-2 primary color tones
- 3-4 same
- 4-6 common tone
- 7-8 common tone
- 9-12 upward movement, Ionian tetachord, setting up climax
- 13 highest point in the harmonic melody, dramatic

C. HARMONIC MATERIAL

CHORD:

- 1-2 plateau Aeolian, dark, soft
- 3-4 strong contrast, bright, tense, hard
- 4-6 D \flat /D to G \flat /A \flat , cryptical cadence D \flat to G \flat V-I US, chords 5 and 6, common US except for one note of voice-leading: G \flat to F
- 7-8 sequence of 5-6, up a minor third, overall positive resolution
- 9-12 fast moving chords, all sus, positive, sets up climax
- 12 point of climax

1) *The Music of Ron Miller* CCP/
Belwin SB266

- 12-13 a kind of cryptic cadence (see chapter on slash chords), with a lower neighbor resolution with the upper structure and a minor third up in the bass, a kind of sequence of 5-6

D. GENERAL QUALITIES

1. Dark, ECMish feel, New York on a drizzle filled autumn day
2. As is all plateau modal tunes, rather simple, but nice to “blow” over
3. Fairly symmetric in form, 8, 8, 16, 8, sectional through-composed
4. Emotional “map”

CHORD:

- 1-2 darkly “hip” to darker
 3-5 slightly “wrinkled,” getting hopeful
 5-12 doubtful love becoming full of hope
 13 dramatic

5. The modulation, change of key from the opening A Aeolian to the ending B \flat Aeolian, contributes to the overall dramatic effect of this tune and was a strong factor in the plan of attack when composing it.

Example 11-10: “The Lieb” by Ron Miller

A A Aeolian **B** G Aeolian

C D \flat Lydian #2 D Lydian #2 A \flat Mixolydian sus G Locrian \flat 2

B Mixolydian sus B \flat Locrian \flat 2 **D** Dsus Esus Fsus Gsus

E B \flat Aeolian