

The Dorian Mode

The Dorian and Aeolian modes are identical apart from the sixth step; in the Dorian this is major, a half-step higher than in the Aeolian. This may seem rather insignificant, yet this small change has a significant impact on the scale and its potential applications.

The Aeolian mode is generally used for soloing over the tonic chord in a minor key (e.g. *Amin7* in the key of *A* minor), and although the Dorian is just as effective in this context, it is also widely used over non-tonic minor chords. The major sixth gives the mode a much brighter, funkier sound than its

darker-sounding Aeolian cousin, and this makes it ideal for creating cool minor licks.

The major sixth interval will also 'sit' happily on top of a minor seventh chord; in fact many soloists will accentuate the major sixth by ending phrases on it instead of a chord tone. You will notice that in figure 1.8 below, an accidental now occurs on the sixth step in order to raise it a half-step. Most music written in the minor key contains accidentals, and since the same key signature is used for related major and minor keys, this is a good way to establish a tune's true tonality when reading music.

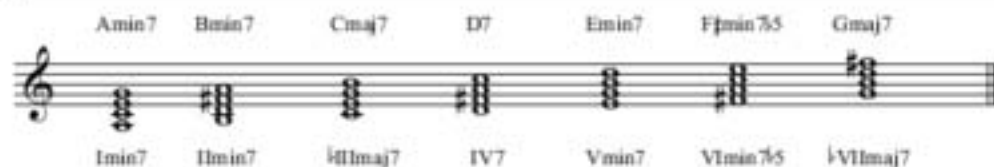
Fig 1.8 The Dorian mode



The raised sixth step of the Dorian also creates a different set of diatonic chords as you will see from figure 1.9(a). There are still three minor sevenths, two major sevenths, one dominant seventh and one

minor seven flat five, however, with the exception of the tonic (*Amin7*), minor third (*Cmaj7*), and fifth (*Emin7*) chords, they occur on different notes of the scale.

Fig 1.9(a) Diatonic Dorian chords



One of the great advantages of using the EDCAG system is that scale patterns and chord voicings will recur, albeit on different scale steps, in modes derived from the same parent scale. Even when comparing say, modes of the major scale with that of the melodic minor, there will still be some simi-

larities with sometimes just one note being different. The more you know about the notes you are playing (i.e. which scale step you are on), the easier it becomes to adapt previously learnt material, and so your knowledge of the fingerboard will cumulatively broaden.