REMEMBERING THE CHORD SCALES

Brightness of the Modes (Chord Scales)

An excellent way to remember the chord scales, and their construction, is to order them by their brightness. The notion of brightness is a typical modal concept. Remember that playing modal is playing with colors: modes with raised degrees have a *brighter* color than modes with lowered degrees; the more lowered degrees in the scale, the *darker* the color gets.

Mode starting on	Mode Name	Mode Construction	Number of Altered Degrees	Altered Degrees in Circle of Fifths
F (IV$^\Delta$)	Lydian	1 – 2 – 3 – ♯4 – 5 – 6 – 7	1 ♯ (1 raised)	♯4 (4th is raised)
C (I$^\Delta$)	Ionian	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	no altered degrees	–
G (V7)	Mixolydian	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – ♭7	1 ♭ (1 lowered)	♭7 (7th is lowered)
D (IIm7)	Dorian	1 – 2 – ♭3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – ♭7	2 ♭ (2 lowered)	♭7 – ♭3
A (VIm7)	Aeolian	1 – 2 – ♭3 – 4 – 5 – ♭6 – ♭7	3 ♭ (3 lowered)	♭7 – ♭3 – ♭6
E (IIIm7)	Phrygian	1 – ♭2 – ♭3 – 4 – 5 – ♭6 – ♭7	4 ♭ (4 lowered)	♭7 – ♭3 – ♭6 – ♭2
B (VIIm7$^{♭5}$)	Locrian	1 – ♭2 – ♭3 – 4 – ♭5 – ♭6 – ♭7	5 ♭ (5 lowered)	♭7 – ♭3 – ♭6 – ♭2 – ♭5

F Lydian, C Ionian, G Mixolydian, D Dorian, A Aeolian, E Phrygian and B Locrian are all *relative* scales: they share the *same tone composition* (being all issued from the same parent scale C Major). Note that the modes, the chord scales, are now ordered following the upward circle of fifths, from *bright* to *dark*:

F	C	G	D	A	E	B
Lydian	Ionian	Mixolydian	Dorian	Aeolian	Phrygian	Locrian

Note also that the altered degrees, *when applied to the C tonality*, are ordered following the circle of fifths. If we apply the mode constructions on all *parallel* scales of C – scales that share the *same central tone* C – C Lydian, C Ionian, C Mixolydian, and so on … we find this:

Mode	Number of Altered Degrees	Altered Degrees …	… in C (in Circle of Fifths)
C Lydian	1 ♯	♯4	F♯
C Ionian	–	–	–
C Mixolydian	1 ♭	♭7	B♭
C Dorian	2 ♭	♭7 – ♭3	B♭ – E♭
C Aeolian	3 ♭	♭7 – ♭3 – ♭6	B♭ – E♭ – A♭
C Phrygian	4 ♭	♭7 – ♭3 – ♭6 – ♭2	B♭ – E♭ – A♭ – D♭
C Locrian	5 ♭	♭7 – ♭3 – ♭6 – ♭2 – ♭5	B♭ – E♭ – A♭ – D♭ – G♭