



# USING THE MAJOR SCALE MODES

By: Andrew Wasson



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## About the Author

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In addition to "Using the Major Scale Modes," Andrew has written "Accelerating Your Learning Curve" a guide to making the most effective use of your study time.

### *Andrew's Music Business Companies...*

- Creative Guitar Studio

Creative Guitar Studio teaches a comprehensive guitar program which focuses on the guitar as an instrument for improvisation. All levels of technique, theory, and styles are covered. Many former students and most all graduates of the Professional Guitar course currently work in various areas of the music business. Andrew Wasson is the author of the courses at Creative Guitar.

- Wedding Day Sound

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## Forward

This book is a comprehensive method on how to use the major scale modes. It is directed towards the advanced beginner, intermediate and advanced guitarist. The beginner will find this an easy-to-follow method with plenty of situations to become creative with modes. The intermediate and advanced players will find this book useful in learning modes for different applications.

Using the Major Scale Modes will provide the guitarist, whatever the level, with a clear and direct approach for understanding and developing the sound and application of modes in any style.

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## THE MAJOR SCALE MODES

I would like to begin by stating that each scale has a distinct sound. This sound is the scale's very character. This character is determined by the series of steps, (tones & semi-tones), found in distance from the tonic note. This structure determines the scale's usage.

Every scale has a step pattern or structure which can basically be categorized into two tonalities: Major and Minor.

The basic Major Scale, or what you may remember from elementary school as DO - RE - MI - FA - SO - LA - TI - DO, is the parent scale for the modes. In modal terminology we call that scale the IONIAN scale. This mode is recognized as one of the "authentic" modes along with the Natural Minor scale or AEOLIAN mode. These scales were first discovered around the 16th century.

Each step of the major scale gives us a new scale or mode. Look at the example below. . .

### EXAMPLE #1

Notes: C<sub>∪</sub>D<sub>∪</sub>E<sub>∪</sub>F<sub>∪</sub>G<sub>∪</sub>A<sub>∪</sub>B<sub>∪</sub>C = C Major Scale  
Steps: T T S T T↓T S  
Relative Minor: A<sub>∪</sub>B<sub>∪</sub>C<sub>∪</sub>D<sub>∪</sub>E<sub>∪</sub>F<sub>∪</sub>G<sub>∪</sub>A = A Minor Scale  
T S T T S T T

In the example we can see how "C Major" has the same notes as "A Minor." They are what is called RELATIVE. They relate to each other by having the same notes.

It is important to state that the scales of "C Ma" & "A Mi" are definitely different in usage.

In example #1 we can also see how "C Ma" & "A Mi" have different scale step patterns. It is this step pattern system which gives each scale its unique sound. This is due mainly to the distance of one interval of each scale. This one intervallic design separates the two primary categories of sound.

## THE TWO PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF SOUND

### MAJOR SOUNDS:

When moving two whole-steps away from any note we create a "Major Third" interval. This distance in any scale creates a foundational characteristic of MAJOR Tonality.

C - E = Major Third

### MINOR SOUNDS:

When moving a whole-tone then a semi-tone from any note we create a "Minor Third" interval. This distance in any scale creates a character which is that of MINOR Tonality.

C - Eb = Minor Third

## MODES IN THE MAJOR CATEGORY OF SOUND

We will examine the names of the modes by learning them in each category of sound.

### THE MAJOR MODES:

- IONIAN = The basic Major scale.  
Step pattern: T T s T T T s
- LYDIAN = A Major scale with a raised fourth degree.  
Step pattern: T T T s T T s
- MIXOLYDIAN = A Major scale with the seventh degree lowered.  
Step pattern: T T s T T s T

## MODES IN THE MINOR CATEGORY OF SOUND

### THE MINOR MODES:

- AEOLIAN = The basic minor scale.  
Step Pattern: T s T T s T T
- DORIAN = A minor scale with a raised sixth degree.  
Step pattern: T s T T T s T
- PHRYGIAN = A minor scale with a lowered second degree.  
step Pattern: s T T T s T T
- LOCRIAN = A minor scale with a lowered fifth and second.  
Step Pattern: s T T s T T T

### ASSIGNMENT

*Pick up your instrument and play through each mode's step pattern. On the guitar a TONE = two frets and a Semi-Tone = one fret. Play on one string and apply each pattern from the same tonic note. Listen to each scale's unique sound character.*