

About the author...

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INTRODUCTION

Every aspiring improviser needs a wide variety of scales to draw on. It's no longer enough for a rock guitarist to know just the "rock scale" (see minor pentatonic). Contemporary rock guitarists are now using the modes of the major scale, blues scales, diminished scales, whole tone scales and a host of others. In the never-ending quest for a personal sound, guitarists have embraced all sorts of exotic scale sounds.

This book is a collection of the most common scales used by improvisers. Many of the scales found here are used frequently by jazz musicians, who need a large number of scales due to the harmonic complexity of this style.

In the beginning, God created the chromatic scale (among others), which contains every possible scale which we as "Westerners" have seen fit to invent. The chromatic scale is made up of twelve different pitches, each a half-step (the smallest musical distance between any two notes. Other cultures commonly use smaller intervals in their scales.) apart. Starting from C, this scale would have the following pitches: C-C#-D-D#-E-F-F#-G-G#-A-A#-B. Every scale or mode in this book is made up of some combination of these pitches.

I'm a firm believer in fretboard visualization. The layout of the scales reflects this belief. I show each scale or mode in a number of different ways: The first way involves showing the scale formula. The scale formula tells you how a scale or mode deviates from a major scale. Everything in music theory is based on the major scale and how it deviates from it. For example, the scale formula for a major scale is: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. If we use C as our beginning note, the C major scale is: C-D-E-F-G-A-B. In the key of A major, the notes would be: A-B-C#-D-E-F#-G#. (see the appendix for all of the major scales.) The formula for A major is still 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. Confused? There's another way of describing the major scale. We can do it by looking at how far the notes are apart. This brings us back to the idea of intervals. In every major scale, the distance between the 1st and 2nd notes is a whole-step. In fact, the distance between most notes in a major scale is a whole step. The half-steps occur between the 3rd and 4th scales degrees and the 7th and 8th. This relationship is expressed with the formula: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7.

W=whole step
h=half step

W W h W W W h
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8

A scale that has a formula such as: 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-b7, is one that has three notes which are different than the major scale version of this scale. We'd describe this scale as having a flatted 3rd, 6th and 7th. The name given to this scale is Natural Minor.

It is actually possible to visualize on the fingerboard using the idea of 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. It's not obvious, like a fingering pattern. But every fingering pattern can be translated into a set of numbers like the ones above.

The next method I use to show a scale is with traditional notation. In most cases, I've based the scale root (the starting note) on G. For those of you who can't read, it's not necessary to know what these pitches are. What is important is that you learn to define a scale or mode sound by its formula. Also, isn't this a great time to get some reading chops together?

The next way I use to show a scale involves actually mapping the scale out over the entire fingerboard. I came across this idea many years ago when I was trying to teach myself every possible way to play a major scale. I simply took every note in the C major scale and drew a dot on the fingerboard on every C-D-E-F-G-A-B. I then tried to break this chaotic group of dots into small fingering patterns. These smaller patterns are the ones shown on the right hand side of the page. (I've bracketed the left hand side page to show you where I broke out the various patterns found on the right hand side of the page.) I found that by linking these smaller patterns together, I could span the entire fingerboard. Notice also that there is always some overlapping that goes on between each of these smaller patterns. These are the notes which you can use to slide from one pattern to the next.

Some of you may have even done what I've just described for yourself and come up with entirely different fingering patterns. This is entirely possible and equally valid. My goal in coming up with my fingerings was to find patterns which didn't involve large hand spreads. Some folks prefer other types of patterns. You may want to work out some of your own patterns. It's a great way to assume responsibility for your own learning.

All scales and modes are accompanied with a brief example as to how you might apply it. Any given scale or mode has a root note. This is the first note of the scale. A primary application of a scale would be where the root note of the scale is G and the root note of the chord we want to use it with is also G. As an example, a G major scale would sound great when played over a G major 7th chord. There are other less obvious applications of scales. These uses I call secondary. An example of a secondary use would be using a D major scale over a G major 7th chord. This does actually work. It produces a Lydian type sound. In secondary applications of the scales and modes, the root tone of the scale does not correspond to the root tone of the chord over which the scale is being used.

The solid colored dots on the fingerboard will all show the location of the scale or mode root. In most cases, these notes will all be G's. These notes are highlighted because they are the most important tones in the scale. The location of the root tones within any fingering pattern affect the phrasing and fingering choices. Our ears also use the root to define any given scale or mode sound.

In this book, the term mode and scale are used interchangeably. Modes are actually derived from scales. In a stricter sense, the term mode dates back to the medieval church modes. During this time, it became common practice to construct a scale (mode) from the tones of the major scale, which usually began and ended on one of the tones in the scale other than the tonic (root note) of the key. This is easily accomplished by simply taking the second note of the major scale and calling it the new root tone of the new scale. Thus, the second mode of the major scale of C is composed of the following notes: D-E-F-G-A-B-C. This is the Dorian mode. The formula for it is: 1-2-b3-4-5-6-b7. It has a minor type sound because of the lowered 3rd and 7th.

It's possible to construct a mode on any note of any scale, be it from the Harmonic minor, Diminished, Melodic minor or Pentatonic scales. The reason for learning these modes is simple; by manipulating these pitches, you can get some very interesting sounds.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

When learning a new scale, begin by studying and practicing the individual patterns. Pay particular attention to the root notes in each of the patterns. I usually start by playing about half of the pattern. This spans an octave. I also strongly urge you to record a chord which can sound while you're trying to get the scale in your fingers. You need to be training your ear as well as your fingers when learning new scale and mode sounds. If you're going to practice the Dorian sound, put down some min6, min7, min9 and min11 chords on tape or program them into your sequencer. (If your going for the C Dorian mode, make sure all of the roots to the above chords are also C.)

I always learn how to play the finger pattern across the fingerboard, then I start connecting two patterns; running back and forth from one to the other, working out appropriate finger shifts. Then I begin building runs that span 3 or more patterns. I also always try to be musical when the guitar is in my hands. This goes for practicing scales too. I play them with feeling and intent. I don't sit in front of the TV and practice. I concentrate on what I'm doing and do it intensely for short periods of time.

There are always alternate ways of fingering anything and this goes for scales too. You may find a number of alternate fingerings. Explore them all. Different fingerings will result in new musical ideas. Play these scales in any way you can imagine. Experiment with different rhythmic groupings such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, triplets and the like. There are many different exercises you can invent which will promote facility with the patterns. Playing the patterns in 3rd's, 4th's, 5th's and 6th's is also a good way to develop some new ideas as well as your crosspicking chops.

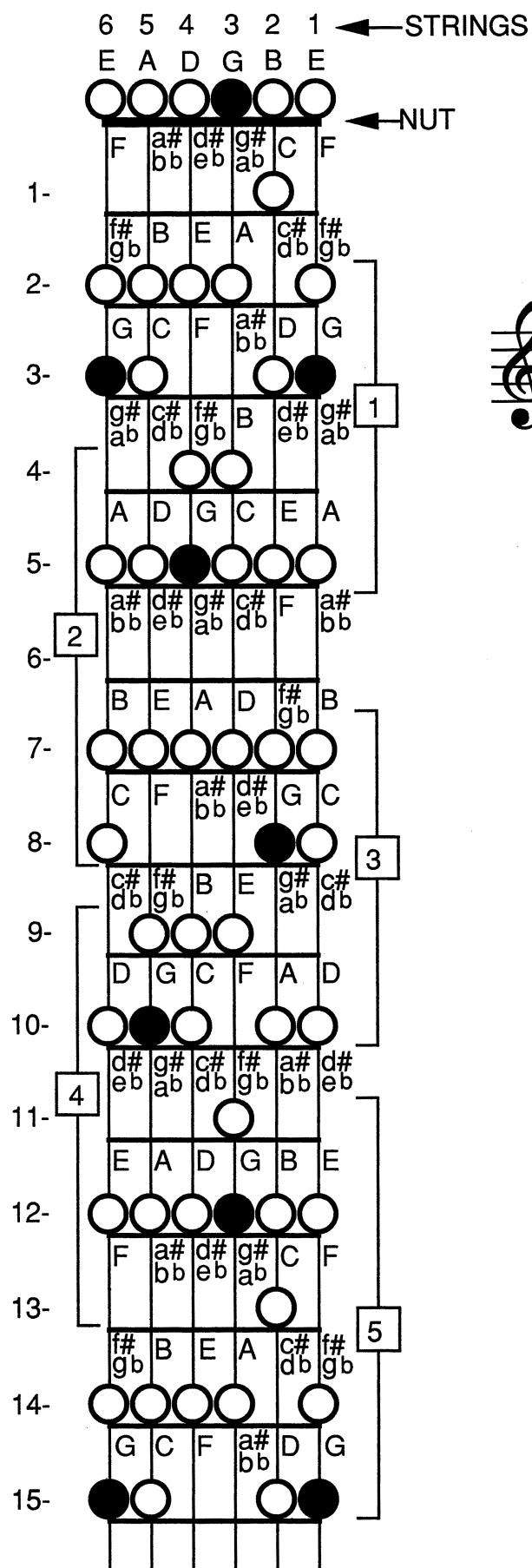
The biggest challenge to scale playing is bridging the gap between scales and music. All too often, the playing of scales turns into a boring exercise, where the student tries to

divorce his/her brain from what the fingers are doing. This is mindless practicing and might even be a waste of time. The real danger here lies in the fact that you might be having a very negative experience with something that should be uplifting and positive. This kind of experience does little to promote creativity and experimentation. When the scales become tedious and boring, stop and give yourself a break. Do something more enjoyable. Set a pace for yourself that is ambitious yet attainable.

Lastly, I suggest learning the major scale and its modes first. These are by far the most important patterns. Next, learn the blues and pentatonic scales if you're into Rock and Blues. If you're into Jazz, make sure you know the Melodic minor and Harmonic minor scale modes (in addition to the major scale and its modes as well as the blues scale) . You'll also find that the Diminished (both versions) and the Whole tone scale are helpful.

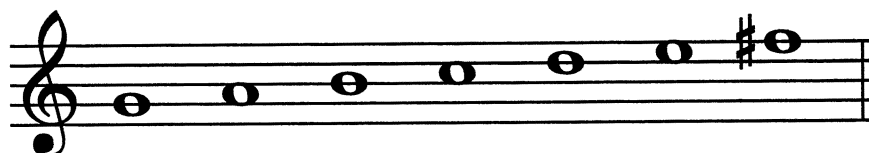
I hope you find this book useful. I certainly have. If you like the way I've organized the material in this book, you may find that my other books, *Introduction to Chord Theory*, *Moveable Guitar Chords*, *Arpeggios for Guitar*, *Chord Embellishment* and *Chord Orbits*, will also be helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. LaVand." with a stylized, cursive script. The signature is written in a fluid, connected style with a large loop at the end.



MAJOR/IONIAN

1-2-3-4-5-6-7



ALTERNATE NAMES:

The major scale is often called the Ionian mode.

PRIMARY USE:

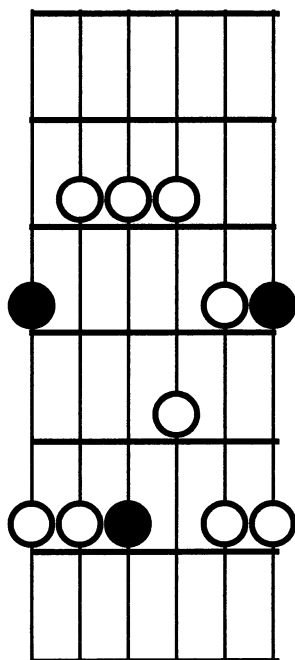
The Ionian is used over unaltered maj type chords such as: maj. triads, maj6, maj7, maj6/9, maj9, maj6/7, maj add9. These chords are usually tonic functioning chords.

EXAMPLE:

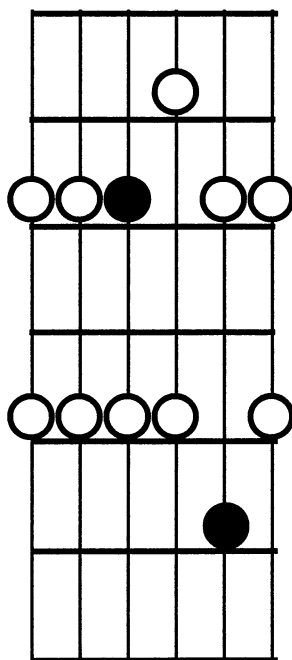
Use the G Ionian for soloing over any of the above mentioned chords as long as their respective roots are all G notes.

PENTATONIC MAJOR

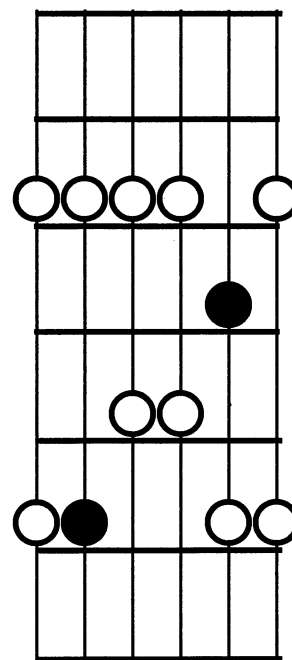
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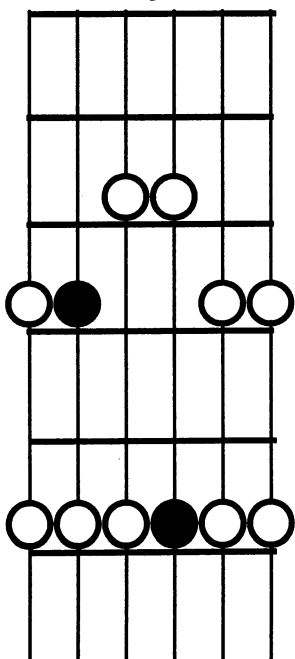
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3



4



5

