

Modes for the Ukulele – everything using the C scale

Seeking release from the “Pentatonic Penitentiary” (quoting Kevin Carroll)

Dorian Mode – D Dorian

The D Dorian mode has exactly the same notes as the C major scale. The only difference is that if you play D Dorian then you are starting on D and finishing on D. So over music in C, then it would sound fairly 'normal', possibly boring.

The sound or feel of the mode depends upon the underlying chords that you play it over.

How does the Dorian mode compares to its relative major scale?

D Dorian mode only differs from the D major scale in that the 3rd and 7th notes are flattened (F# becomes F, and C# becomes C). This is what gives the Dorian mode its unique flavour, the flattened third, and the flattened seventh, or ...

1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7

How do I use a mode?

To use modes effectively, you have to think in terms of *modal chord progressions*, and not just simply see everything in terms of the parent key.

D Dorian mode contains **D E F G A B C D** (notice how it is the same notes as in the C major scale?). Building a chord out of this (taking the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th notes (**D F A C**) gives us a Dm7 chord. This strongly suggests that you play in the key of C, **but** the D minor chord (or Dm7) is at the heart of the progression. Can you think of any songs that do that? (Hint: a few suggestions are made at the end).

Speaking more generally, the Dorian mode will work best when the chord progressions of a song resolve themselves on a **IIm7** chord.

For example, have someone play a simple jazzy chord progression of Dm7 and C, and then try improvising over it using D Dorian mode.

Put another way, the Dorian mode uses the major scale of the degree one whole tone lower. (So D Dorian is same notes as C major scale, E Dorian is D, F Dorian is Eb, etc.)

The Dorian mode has a slightly minor feel, but is mixed with more intriguing overtones. The mode is used in a lots of music including classical, pop, rock, metal and jazz.

Alternatively you can think of the scale being:

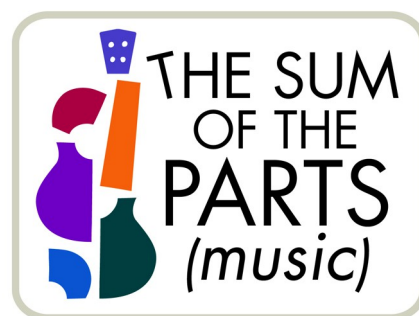
Tone - Semitone - Tone - Tone - Tone - Semitone - Tone

or T-S-T-T-T-S-T

(The standard major scale is T-T-S-T-T-T-S)

Examples of songs that feature Dorian mode

- Drunken Sailor
- Scarborough Fair
- So What (Miles Davis)
- Eleanor Rigby (Beatles)
- Wicked Game (Chris Isaak)



Much of this material is sourced from <http://blog.rolandcorp.com.au/index.php/dorian-mode-guitarists/>

For a thorough and difficult explanation, look up Dorian Mode in Wikipedia.

Written out by Mark, January 2015 for educational porpoises only

www.thesumoftheparts.com.au

This is the first in a series of helpful leaflets about Modes.

The other modes are Ionian, (Dorian-this one), Phrygian, Lydian, Myxomatosis, Aeolian and Locrian (one of those is a fib – try to pick which one it is).