

# Using Three Common Modes on the Native American Style Flute

R. Iván Iriarte



*Expanding your tonal vocabulary*

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NAF TABlature by R. Carlos Nakai

Flute Fingering Fonts courtesy of Clint Goss: [www.NAFTracks.com](http://www.NAFTracks.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

The use of the Native American Flute (NAF) is traced by historians as far back as 2,500 years ago. There are many legends, carried mostly by oral traditions, about the origins and uses of this instrument by the native tribes of North America. The use of this instrument was probably related to sacred and ritual music. After a long period of suppression, the NAF had a resurgence in the United States of America during the decade of the 1970's. Popularization of NAF music is credited mostly to R. Carlos Nakai, who became a prominent performer and promoter of the music associated with this instrument during the 1990s to the present. Traditionally, NAFs were constructed using the maker's body parts (arm, hand, fingers) as units of measure. The finger holes were in most part evenly spaced, to the comfort of the maker-player. The result is that the majority of older NAF's do not conform to any conventional western tuning.

In modern times, flute makers who are not necessarily members or descendants of any Native American tribe or cultural tradition have become adept at making flutes that are in the style of old NAFs, but are tuned to a conventional western system. So, we call them Native American *Style* Flutes (NASF's), and they are almost always tuned to produce a conventional *Minor Pentatonic scale*. The majority of professional and amateur NASF players today tend to limit their tonal palette to the Minor Pentatonic scale.

This book will focus on learning fingerings and sounds of several musical modes. Modes, as used in this book, refer to tonal sequences derived from the conventional major scale, using different degrees of the scale as the "root note" or tonic. The concept will be better explained in the text.

In Jazz Improvisation and Education the modes are used as the basis for understanding what are called as "chord-scale relationships", and they are used to understand which notes fit over a specific chord in the harmony. In this book, the modes are ***not*** used in that manner. We will use the modes as ways to hear and feel the tonality, root, or "home base" of a piece or song. The modes are frequently associated with different moods and melodic colors. They can be used as basis to create improvised melodies or to compose a musical piece. Since the major scale has seven notes, it can generate seven modes, one from each degree of the scale. However, two of the modes (Ionian and Aeolian) correspond to the conventional Major and Minor scales. One of the modes (Locrian) is almost never used. The Phrygian mode is used in certain types of music (like Flamenco), but its use can be complicated. Therefore, this book will concentrate on the remaining three modes. The Dorian and Mixolydian modes are the two most frequently used. The Lydian mode is not that common, but it is particularly colorful.

The author of this book presumes that the reader is not a complete beginner playing the NASF. In order to gain the most benefit from studying the material in this book, the reader should have some basic knowledge of the NASF, be able to play some melodies using the Minor Pentatonic scale, and understand the commonly used TABlature system developed by R. Carlos Nakai.

All the musical examples intended to be played on the NASF are notated using the TABlature system by R. Carlos Nakai. All the fingering diagrams are courtesy of Clint Goss: [www.NAFTracks.com](http://www.NAFTracks.com)

## SUGGESTED WAY TO USE THIS BOOK

In order for you to obtain the most benefit from this book, consider the following suggestions:

1. Read the first three chapters to obtain some fundamental information about modes. Do not worry too much about memorizing every piece of information written on these sections. Aim to understand the general concepts presented.
2. Study the modes one at a time in the order they are presented. Try not to do too much in a short time. Learning the modes in the order they are presented will facilitate the learning process, because you will be able to build your knowledge about one mode using the foundation of the previous mode. They are related to each other in a logical manner.
3. For each one of the chapters that cover the modes (Chapters 4 – 6) follow the same procedure:
  - a. Read the information presented.
  - b. Play the notes of the mode in a scalar fashion (from lower note to top) following the fingering chart provided.
  - c. Get a feeling for the sound of the mode.
  - d. Play the exercises provided in order to get a feeling of melodic patterns that are common for the mode.
  - e. Learn to play the written piece provided for each mode.
  - f. Then try to use the ideas in the exercises and written pieces to improvise your own melodies.
  - g. If you have a friend who can accompany you with the guitar, use the guitar chord progressions shown on each chapter.
4. Listen to the Audio Tracks indicated in the text in order to hear the examples found in Chapters 4 - 6. The Audio Tracks were generated using MIDI technology, exported to mp3 format. Therefore, they do not sound like a real NASF, but their intention is to present an idea of the sounds of the different modes.

## CHAPTER 1 – HISTORY AND FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS ABOUT MODES

Musical modes are defined in western musical theory as scales or ways to organize musical notes in order to use them as an “alphabet” to construct melodies. The origin of modes dates back to ancient Greece. In the context of Greek music, the concept of modes refers to different ways of tuning a seven string lyre, and is based on theoretical concepts developed by Pythagoras (500 BC) and Aristoxenus (335 BC). The names of musical modes were derived from different ethnic groups or tribes in Greece (Dorians, Phrygians, Lydians...).

The use of modes was adopted by the Catholic Church during the middle ages as the basis for *Gregorian chant*. The modes used in Gregorian chant had names similar to the ancient Greek ones, but the arrangement of tones was different.

Western music after the Renaissance, which includes the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods, adopted the almost exclusive use of the major and minor scales (“keys”). The use of traditional modes was practically discontinued in western classical music. However, many folk cultural traditions use melodies based on modes.

In the twentieth century there was a resurgence of interest in the use of musical modes. In their modern usage, modes are defined as different tonal arrangements derived from the conventional Major scale. Part of the modern interest in modes came from the work of many composers such as Percy Grainger, Béla Bartók and others trying to evoke the moods of folk music. In the world of Jazz, artists like Miles Davis and John Coltrane began to compose pieces and develop improvisations based on modes. Also in the world of Jazz, the theory of modes has become the mainstream method of teaching what music educators call chord-scale relationships, as a basis for improvisation over standard songs. This latter approach to the use of modes is different from the one used in this book.

## CHAPTER 2 - SOME NECESSARY THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

Modern musical theory defines *seven* modes, derived from the conventional Major scale. They adopt the *names* of ancient Greek modes, although the *sounds* of modern modes do not correspond to those of ancient Greek music. Among the seven modes derived from the Major scale, two of them (Ionian and Aeolian) correspond to the conventional Major and Minor scales. One of the modes (Locrian) is rarely used because of its strange quality. The Phrygian mode, although not so rare, has to be addressed in a special manner, and requires some special effort to understand and “hear”. For these reasons, this book cover only the three remaining modes (Mixolydian, Dorian and Lydian). In order to have some understanding of modes and be able to use them when improvising on the NASF it will be necessary to deal with some unavoidable theoretical concepts. For readers who have some musical background and can read musical notation it should be fairly easy to follow the discussion below. For people without any musical background the concepts may be less easy to understand, but certainly not impossible.

One important concept that is fundamental in both western music and music from other cultures is the idea of a *tonic* note. When you listen to a song or piece of music there is usually a note that you hear as being the “home base” or the point where you want the music to return or finish. This is the “Do” when you hear music using the well-known Major scale of western music (Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Ti-Do). This scale is illustrated below in conventional musical notation. The Major scale is also called the Ionian mode.

**C Major scale (Ionian )**

DO      RE      MI      FA      SOL      LA      TI      DO  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8 (I)

The note designated “Do” is the tonic. When you construct melodies using the notes of this scale (in this case they are the white notes on the piano), your ear wants the melody to return or finish on the note “C” (Do).

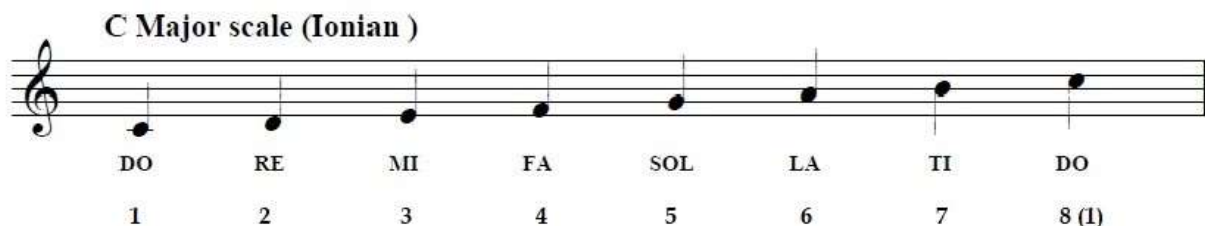
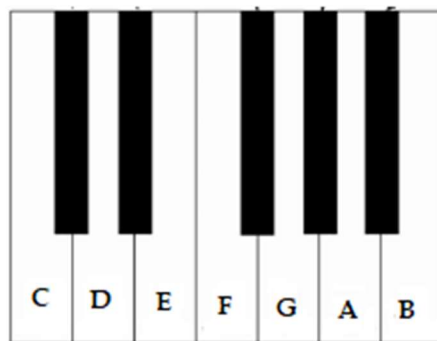
Now, imagine that you continue to work only with the notes of the C Major scale (the white notes on the piano), but you shift your “feel” of the location of the tonic to the “*second degree*” or the note “D”. Using the same notes, you now construct a scale with “D” as the bottom note. Now you have the D *Dorian* mode.

**D Dorian**

So now you construct melodies or songs combining the notes in such a way that our ear takes us to end our phrases or the song on the note “D”. When learning the different modes it is recommended that you get familiar with the sound of each mode, not only with the theory of how they are constructed. In this way you will be better prepared to use them in a musical way when improvising or playing a song based on a mode.

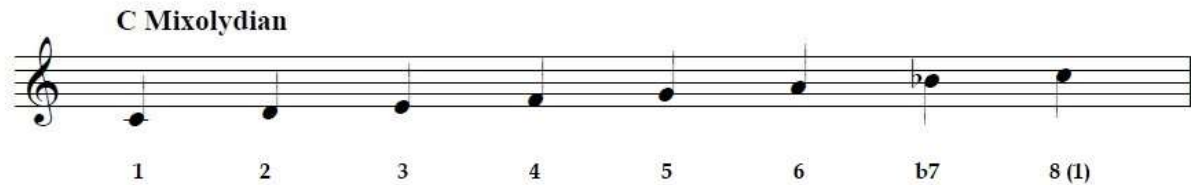
The most common method of explaining modes, found in music theory books is called the *derivative* method. Every mode is explained, as done with the Dorian Mode above, as being *derived* from a “parent” major scale, only using a different note as the tonic. Therefore, we can derive seven different modes from each major scale. However, if we want to use this system to construct modes on the NASF it becomes impractical (although possible) because of the limited range of the instrument. If you begin with a Major scale on the NASF and construct the modes from this Major scale in the manner explained, the subsequent “tonics” for the modes will get higher and higher, getting out of the NASF’s range after the second or third mode. So, there is another manner to construct and understand modes, which is more practical to work on the NASF. It is called the *parallel* method. We keep the tonic note the same, and alter the notes of the major scale or subsequent modes to construct the others.

If the reader has access to a piano or keyboard, it is suggested that you follow the explanation below while playing the notes on the instrument. We will begin again with the C Major scale; this scale is constructed from all the white keys of the piano or keyboard. The note C is the white key to the left of two black keys. As mentioned previously, when we construct melodies using notes from this scale, our ears want to end the melody on the note C. We call this note the “tonic” (think of “home base”).



Now, we will keep the note “C” as the tonic, and change one note of the scale in order to change its “color”. By keeping the note “C” as our root, we stay on the same *range* of notes.

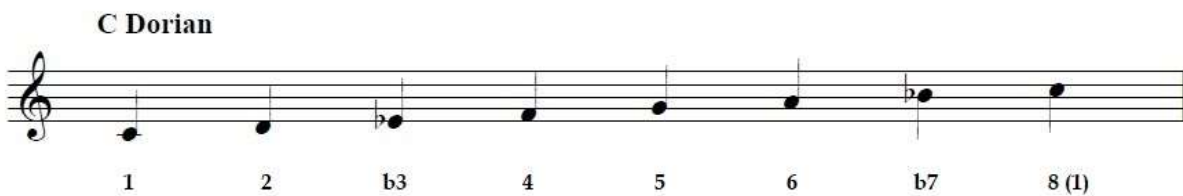
We begin by *lowering* the *seventh degree* of the Major scale by a half step, that is, change the note “B” or “Ti” to a “Bb”. Instead of playing the note “B”, we will substitute it with the black key to its left. When we do that, we get the C *Mixolydian* mode. In conventional music language we say that the Mixolydian mode is like a Major scale with a *flat seventh degree*.



Readers who have some musical background and are familiar with notation will appreciate that the C *Mixolydian* mode contains the same *notes* as an “F” Major scale (all white notes on the piano except for the Bb). That is, C Mixolydian is a mode using the notes of an F Major scale, but using the *fifth degree* of this Major scale (“C”) as the *tonic*.

If you do not have previous musical background, you may disregard the previous paragraph and concentrate on understanding that the *Mixolydian* mode sounds *like a Major scale with a lowered seventh*. This lowered seventh is the *characteristic note* of the mode. It is what makes a Mixolydian melody sound different from one based on the Major scale. So, when you improvise on this mode you will try to emphasize this note, and the melodic movement *from this note to the tonic*.

Now, starting with the Mixolydian mode, let us change *one other* note. We will lower the *third degree* of the Mixolydian mode by a half step; change the note “E” to an “Eb”. Instead of playing the note “E” we play the black note just to its left. When we do that, we get the C *Dorian* mode. We say that the Dorian mode is like a Major Scale with *flat third and flat seventh degrees*.



Readers with a musical background will appreciate that the C *Dorian* mode contains the same *notes* as a “Bb” Major scale (all white notes on the piano except for the Bb and Eb). That is, C Dorian is a mode using the notes of a Bb Major scale, but using the *second degree* of this Major scale (“C”) as the *tonic*.

If you do not have previous musical background, you may disregard the previous paragraph and concentrate on understanding that the *Dorian* mode sounds *like a Major scale with a lowered seventh and lowered third...* or as a *Mixolydian* mode with a lowered third.

Once you have a scale or mode with a lowered third, theorists say that it has a “minor” quality. Since there are several types of minor scales and modes, and all of them contain a lowered (minor) third, the notes that will help us “tell them apart” – and behave as characteristic notes of these modes are the sixth and seventh degrees. When improvising melodies on the Dorian mode, in addition to the *third degree*, you should emphasize the *sixth and seventh degrees*.

In order to discuss the last mode used in this book we need to go back to the beginning. Go back to our good old C Major scale.

**C Major scale (Ionian )**

DO      RE      MI      FA      SOL      LA      TI      DO  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8 (1)

Now, instead of changing one note by lowering it by a half step, we will take the fourth degree (F) and *raise it* by a half step to F#. Instead of playing the note “F” we play the black note just to its right (we are raising it, not lowering it). We have just created a C *Lydian* mode. We say that the Lydian mode is like a Major Scale with *sharp fourth degree*.

**C Lydian**

1      2      3      #4      5      6      7      8 (1)

Readers with a musical background will appreciate that the C *Lydian* mode contains the same *notes* as a “G” Major scale (all white notes on the piano except for the F#). That is, C Lydian is a mode using the notes of a G Major scale, but using the *fourth degree* of this Major scale (“C”) as the *tonic*.

If you do not have previous musical background, you may disregard the previous paragraph and concentrate on understanding that the Lydian mode sounds *like a Major scale with a raised fourth degree*. This raised fourth becomes the *characteristic sound* of the Lydian mode.

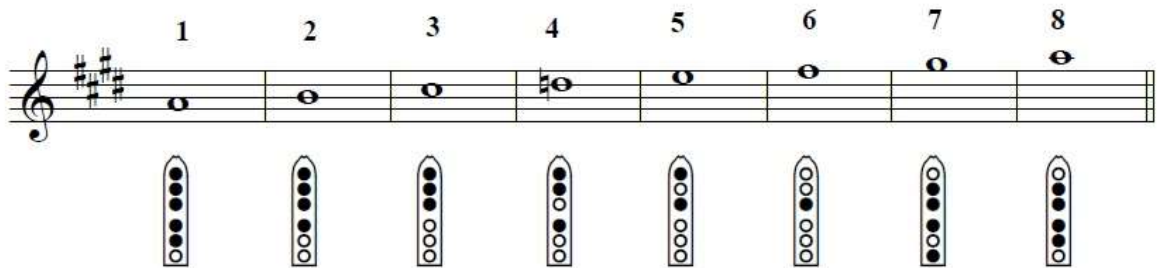
The summary of all the “theory” we have to know to construct the modes on the NASF used in this book is summarized on the table below:

<b>Name of mode</b>	<b>Note that needs to change</b>
Lydian	Raise 4th degree of Major scale
<b>Major Scale</b>	
Mixolydian	Lower 7 <sup>th</sup> degree of Major scale
Dorian	Lower 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree of Mixolydian

### CHAPTER 3 - CONSTRUCTING MODES ON THE NASF

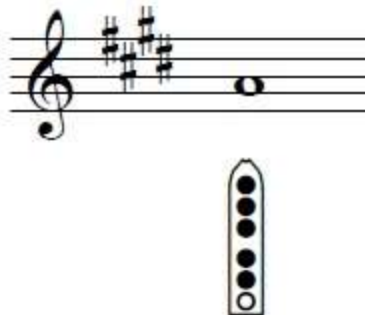
In order to construct modal scales on the NASF, we will follow the method explained in Chapter 2, that is – we will begin with the Major scale and construct the remaining modes by changing one note at a time. Most NASF players become familiar with the fingerings for the Major scale, shortly after they have learned the basic fingerings for the pentatonic scale. The most common fingerings for the notes of the Major scale on the NASF are shown on the following figure:

#### Major scale



The fingerings for the higher two notes (seventh degree and higher octave) may vary on different NASF's. So, you may need to make adjustments for different flutes. You will find several alternate fingerings in the Appendix.

The tonic (home base = 1<sup>st</sup> degree) for this Major scale is this note:

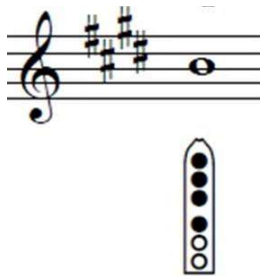


Which is notated as an "A" on Nakai TABlature system.

We could construct all the remaining modes by sequentially altering one note at a time from this scale. However, the author has found that these fingerings present two major disadvantages for people beginning to improvise with modes:

1. Many cross-fingerings are required
2. Improvised and written melodies frequently approach the tonic from the seventh note below. If you use the "A" note as tonic, the note below will require the tricky "half-hole" fingering.

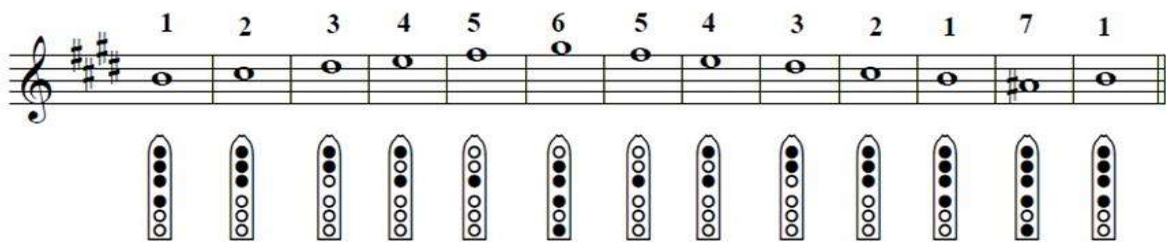
For the two reasons above, the author recommends that to begin working with modal melodies you construct fingerings beginning with a Major scale that uses the following note as tonic:



Which is notated as “B” on Nakai TABlature system.

The fingerings for the notes of this Major scale are shown on the following figure:

**Major scale**



Observe that there is a tradeoff involved in using this scale. In exchange for the advantages of getting fewer cross fingerings when you construct the remaining modes, and having access to the “seventh below the tonic” degree, we will have to put up with one (probably slight) disadvantage: Now we do not have available the upper notes (7 and 8) of the Major scale. You may appreciate this concept by listening to Audio Track #1, which demonstrates the Major scale with tonic notes “A” and “B”, as they would sound on a NASF tuned in F# minor.

On the next three chapters, we will start with this version of the Major scale and progressively change one note at a time to construct the modes that are used in this book.

## CHAPTER 4 – THE MIXOLYDIAN MODE

In order to construct the Mixolydian mode on the NASF we will retain the “B” note as the tonic and lower the *seventh degree* of the Major scale by a half step. So your fingering for the Mixolydian mode will be similar to the Major scale except for one note. In reality we will have two different fingerings, because now the *seventh degree* will be available both *below* and *above* the tonic.

### Major scale:

The Major scale on the NASF is shown on a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, B5, A5, G5. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 7, 1. Below the staff are 14 fingering diagrams, each representing a note on the scale. Each diagram shows a vertical column of five circles representing the strings of the NASF, with black dots indicating which strings are to be fretted.

### Mixolydian mode:

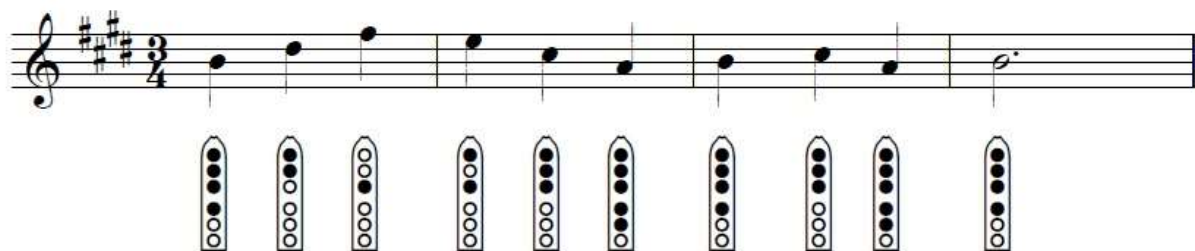
The Mixolydian mode on the NASF is shown on a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F5, G4. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7\*, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 7\*, 1. Below the staff are 14 fingering diagrams, each representing a note on the scale. Each diagram shows a vertical column of five circles representing the strings of the NASF, with black dots indicating which strings are to be fretted.

To become familiar with the sound and fingerings of this mode, play the following exercises:

### Exercise 1

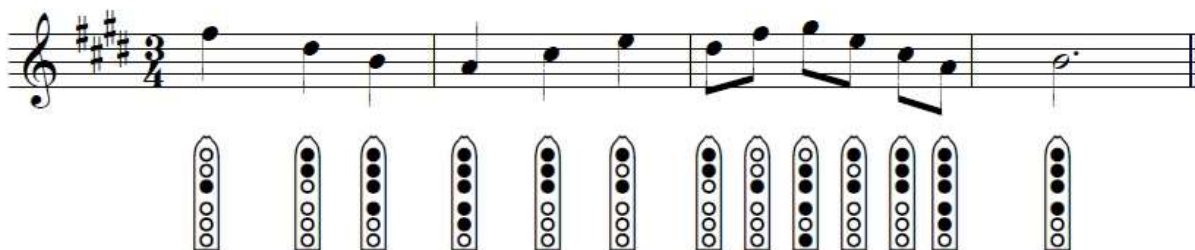
Exercise 1 is a musical exercise on a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F5, G4. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 7, 1. Below the staff are 14 fingering diagrams, each representing a note on the scale. Each diagram shows a vertical column of five circles representing the strings of the NASF, with black dots indicating which strings are to be fretted.

## Exercise 2



Exercise 2 is a musical exercise in 3/4 time, F# minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The melody consists of the following notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. Below the staff are ten fret diagrams for a six-string instrument. Each diagram shows a vertical column of six circles representing strings. The notes are indicated by black dots on the strings: 1st string (top), 2nd string, 3rd string, 4th string, 5th string, and 6th string (bottom).

## Exercise 3



Exercise 3 is a musical exercise in 3/4 time, F# minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The melody consists of the following notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Below the staff are thirteen fret diagrams for a six-string instrument. Each diagram shows a vertical column of six circles representing strings. The notes are indicated by black dots on the strings: 1st string (top), 2nd string, 3rd string, 4th string, 5th string, and 6th string (bottom).

Learn the piece in the following page (**Cantiga 263**). This piece is one of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* – a collection of several hundred pieces that were probably heard in the court of Alfonso X – or “Alfonso the Wise”, king of Castile and Leon (Spain) during the 13<sup>th</sup> century (1252 – 1284). The majority of these Cantigas are based on modal scales, which were prevalent in European music during the Middle Age. Cantiga 263 uses the Mixolydian mode. Try to get familiar with the sound of this mode and how the *characteristic note* (the lowered seventh) gives this mode a different “color” from the familiar Major scale that is used in most Western music. Songs that are based on the Mixolydian mode then have a distinct quality that makes them feel different from songs based on the conventional Major scale.

Audio Track #2 demonstrates Exercises 1 – 3 and Cantiga 263, as they would sound on a NASF tuned in F# minor.

# Que Muyto Meu Pago Cantiga #263

Traditional from Castile & Leon - 13th Century Spain

Mixolydian mode

The musical score consists of six staves of music in Mixolydian mode, 3/4 time. Each staff contains a melodic line with notes and rests, and a corresponding tablature line with circles representing fret positions on a string. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score concludes with a double bar line and the word "Fine".

**Fine**

**D.C. al Fine**

Once you get comfortable playing the previous exercises and the piece provided, you should begin improvising your own melodies with the Mixolydian mode. Aim to end your musical phrases on the *tonic*. Play the seventh degree with some frequency, to remind the listener that this is a *different color* from the Major scale. Emphasize the following notes:

The image shows a musical staff in the key of F# minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The first measure contains a whole note labeled "Tonic" (F#). The second measure contains a whole note labeled "Seventh degree below" (F). The third measure contains a quarter note labeled "5" (E), followed by a quarter note labeled "6" (D), and a quarter note labeled "5" (E). Below the staff are five fretboard diagrams for the strings, showing the fingerings for these notes: F# (1st fret), F (no fret), E (5th fret), D (6th fret), and E (5th fret).

You can also play with your guitarist player friend using chord progressions based on the Mixolydian mode. If your NASF is in the most common key, which is F# minor, have your friend place a capo on the second fret and play the following progression:

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Above the staff are five guitar chord diagrams: A major (x02220), G major (320033), A major (x02220), E minor (020020), and A major (x02220). The staff contains a series of slanted lines representing the rhythm for each chord, with a repeat sign at the end.

If your NASF is tuned to another key, your accompanist will need to either change the position of the capo, or transpose the chords, according to the following table:

Flute Key	Capo Fret					
E	No capo	A	G	A	Em	A
G	3	A	G	A	Em	A
A	No capo	D	C	D	Am	D

To the ears of the author, this mode has a certain "pastoral" quality to it that makes it very enjoyable to play and to listen. Audio Track #3 demonstrates a brief melody in Mixolydian Mode, using the guitar accompaniment shown. This is how it would sound on a NASF tuned in F# minor.

## CHAPTER 5 – THE DORIAN MODE

To construct the Dorian mode on the NASF we will continue the same process as before, changing one note from the mode that you learned previously. From the fingering that you already learned for the Mixolydian mode, you will lower the *third degree* by one half step. The fingering for the Dorian mode will be similar to the Mixolydian except for one note:

### Mixolydian mode:

### Dorian mode:

The Dorian is one of several modes that have a “minor” quality. This is due to the lowered (minor) third degree. The modes that have a lowered third degree tend to have a “darker” sound, compared with the “brighter” sound of modes that have a major third (like the Major scale and Mixolydian). The sixth and the seventh degrees of the Dorian mode are the other two *characteristic notes* that differentiate this mode from other minor scales. These notes should be emphasized on improvisations. To become familiar with the sound and fingerings of this mode, play the following exercises:

### Exercise 4

### Exercise 5

The image shows a musical staff for Exercise 5 in F# minor, 4/4 time. The melody consists of 16 notes: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), and D3 (half). Below the staff are 16 fingering diagrams, each representing a note. Each diagram is a vertical rectangle with four circles representing fingers. Black dots indicate which fingers are pressed down. For example, the first note (F#4) has the first and second fingers pressed, while the final note (D3) has the first and second fingers pressed.

### Exercise 6

The image shows a musical staff for Exercise 6 in F# minor, 4/4 time. The melody consists of 16 notes: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), and D3 (half). Below the staff are 16 fingering diagrams, each representing a note. Each diagram is a vertical rectangle with four circles representing fingers. Black dots indicate which fingers are pressed down. For example, the first note (F#4) has the first and second fingers pressed, while the final note (D3) has the first and second fingers pressed.

Learn the song shown on the following page (**Cantiga 10**). This is another *Cantiga* from Castile and Leon, composed during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century in Spain. In this case, the melody is constructed using the Dorian mode. When you learn this song observe the emphasis given to the *sixth* and *seventh* degrees of the scale on the second section. These two notes, in addition to the lowered (minor) third define the sound as Dorian.

Audio Track #4 demonstrates Exercises 4 – 6 and Cantiga 10 as they would sound on a NASF tuned in F# minor.

# Rosa das Rosas

## Cantiga #10

Traditional from Castile & Leon - 13th Century Spain

Dorian mode

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. Below each staff are guitar chord diagrams. The first staff begins with the text "Dorian mode" and includes a triplet of eighth notes marked with a "3". The second staff concludes with the word "Fine". The sixth staff concludes with the instruction "D.C. al Fine".

As before, once you become familiar with these fingerings and the sound of the Dorian mode, begin to play your own improvised melodies. Remember to end most of your phrases on the tonic, and to emphasize the *third, sixth and seventh degrees*.

The following is one good chord progression to use if you play with a guitar. If your NASF is in F#m, the guitar player should place a capo on the second fret:

To play with flutes in other keys, the position of the capo should be changed or the chords transposed, according to the following table:

Flute Key	Capo Fret					
E	No capo	Am	D	Am	Em	Am
G	3	Am	D	Am	Em	Am
A	No capo	Dm	C	Dm	Am	Dm

Audio Track #5 demonstrates a melody in Dorian Mode, using the guitar accompaniment shown. This is how it would sound on a NASF tuned in F# minor.

## CHAPTER 6 – THE LYDIAN MODE

Now let's discuss the Lydian mode. The Lydian mode may sound very strange to many ears, but it has a very colorful quality. In order to construct this mode on the NASF we have to go back to the Major scale because instead of *lowering* a note from a previous mode, as we have been doing so far, this mode requires that we *raise* the *fourth degree* of the Major scale by a half step. So, you go back and review the fingering for the Major scale with "B" as the tonic:

**Major scale:**

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notes are B, C#, D#, E, F#, G#, A, G#, F#, E, D#, C#. Above the staff, the fingering numbers are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 7, 1. Below the staff are 13 fingering diagrams, each showing a hand with four fingers (index, middle, ring, pinky) and a thumb. The diagrams illustrate the fingerings for each note: B (1), C# (2), D# (3), E (4), F# (5), G# (6), A (5), G# (4), F# (3), E (2), D# (1), C# (7), and B (1).

**Lydian mode:** (We *raise* the fourth degree of the Major scale, obtaining the following fingering)

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notes are B, C#, D#, E, F#, G#, A, G#, F#, E, D#, C#. Above the staff, the fingering numbers are 1, 2, 3, 4\*, 5, 6, 5, 4\*, 3, 2, 1, 7, 1. Below the staff are 13 fingering diagrams, each showing a hand with four fingers (index, middle, ring, pinky) and a thumb. The diagrams illustrate the fingerings for each note: B (1), C# (2), D# (3), E (4\*), F# (5), G# (6), A (5), G# (4\*), F# (3), E (2), D# (1), C# (7), and B (1). The asterisk on the 4th and 8th notes indicates that the lower finger is lifted to reach the note.

Observe that starting from the tonic you only need to lift the *lower finger* of each note to get to the following one, until you get to the top two notes. If you want to get a sense of the Lydian *sound*, think about the *opening phrase* (not the rest of the song) of *María* by Leonard Bernstein, from the musical *West Side Story*. The *Simpsons Theme Song* is another melody based on the Lydian mode. The raised fourth gives the Lydian mode its distinctive flavor.

Practice the following exercises to become familiar with the Lydian sound, before you begin improvising your own melodies.

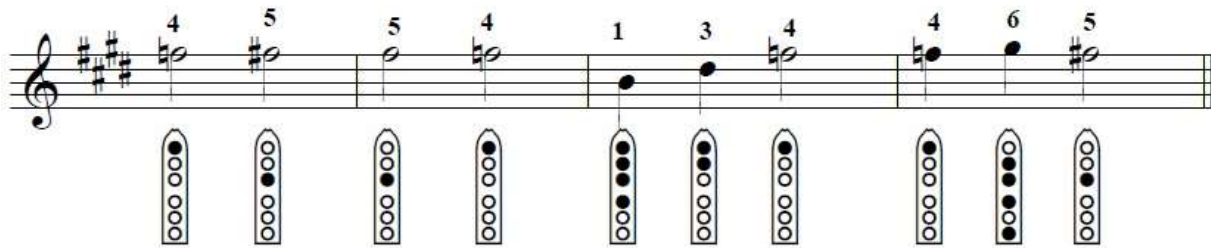


# Mikrokosmos 37

Béla Bartók

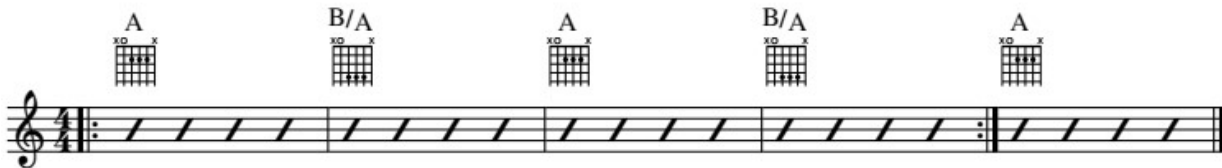
The image displays the musical score for Mikrokosmos 37 by Béla Bartók. It consists of four staves of music, each with a corresponding fingering diagram below it. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The fingering diagrams are represented by vertical rectangles containing circles, indicating the specific fingers used for each note. The first staff contains 11 notes, the second 11 notes, the third 11 notes, and the fourth 11 notes. The fingering diagrams are arranged in a way that shows the sequence of fingerings for each note in the piece.

Like before, try to play your own improvised melodies using the Lydian mode. The most characteristic note of the mode is the *raised fourth* (notated as “F natural”) and it should be emphasized in improvisations.



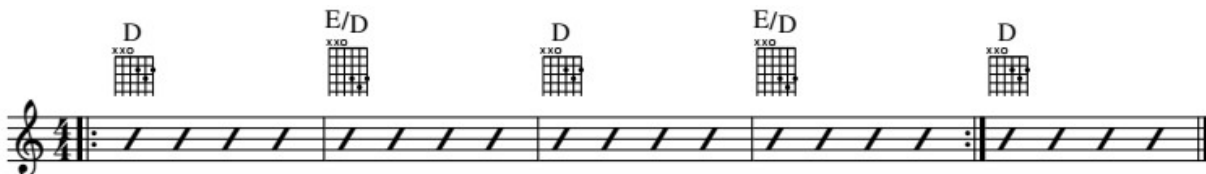
It is very difficult to create a Lydian chord progression with simple guitar chords that will retain a strong sense of where is the “root” or “tonic”. One way to address this problem is to create a sequence where the chords move while keeping constant the *bass note*.

Have your guitarist friend play the following progression. He or she will play an “A” chord and then move the finger “claw” to the fourth fret, keeping the open fifth string (“A”) in the bass. The first string is muted:



As before, if your NASF is in the key of *F#m*, your guitar playing friend should place a capo on the second fret, if he or she plays the above progression. If your NASF is in the key of *Em*, your guitar playing friend should play the progression without a capo. If your NASF is in the key of *Gm*, the capo should go on the third fret.

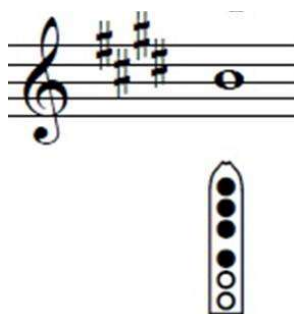
If you improvise on a Lydian mode with a flute in *Am*, have your guitar player use the following progression, *without a capo*. The “D” chord shape moves to the fourth fret keeping the bass on the open fourth string (D):



Audio Track #7 demonstrates a melody in Lydian Mode, using the first guitar accompaniment shown above. It would sound this way on a NASF tuned in F# minor.

## CLOSING REMARKS – FOR FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

The fingerings and patterns that have been presented in this book are those that appear to be easier to learn when a NASF player wants to experiment for the first time with modal sounds. The book has covered modes that use the note notated as “B” in Nakai TABlature as the tonic.



In reality, it is *possible* to construct *any* mode from *any* note on the instrument. On the NASF, in many instances the fingerings that result are impractical or the notes get out of range.

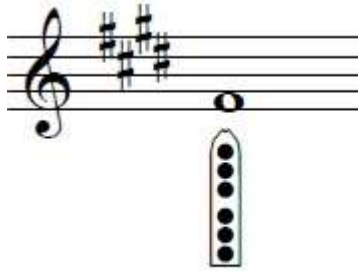
However, when you are playing specific pieces or songs, sometimes you need to use modal scales using a root or tonic that falls on a different note than the one you learned, depending on the range of the song. For example, the song may require you to play the note that is a full octave above the tonic. If you play the song using the notated “B” as the tonic, the higher note will not be available. In those instances, it may be useful to learn fingerings for modes using different tonic notes.

The author has found that modes built on the tonics notated as “A” and “F#” on Nakai TABlature are the more practical.



When you use modes based on one of these two notes as the tonic there is usually a tradeoff between the advantage of having access to higher notes of the mode and the disadvantage of complicated cross-fingerings or half-hole fingerings. Working with these tradeoffs is one of the beauties of playing the NASF.

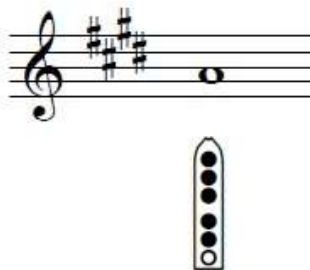
All of the modes using the note “F#” as the tonic...



...will require a half-hole fingering for the second degree.

Another disadvantage of using this tonic is the fact that you do not have access to *any notes below* the tonic. Other than that, the fingerings for most of the modes from this tonic are not particularly difficult. The Dorian mode from this tonic is particularly useful to learn.

Modes using the note “A” as the tonic...



...have the disadvantage of requiring several cross-fingerings.

Another disadvantage is that in order to play the *seventh degree below* the tonic you need one of the tricky half-hole notes.

In the Appendix you will find the fingerings of the three modes discussed in this book, based on the two tonic notes mentioned above, as a reference. Also, you will find a fingering chart (in NakaiTablature) for all the notes of the NASF, including some alternate fingerings that may work better on your flute for the high notes.

## APPENDIX

# Modes with Tonic on A

Lydian mode

9 Major Scale

17 Mixolydian mode

25 Dorian mode

# Modes with Tonic on F#

Lydian mode

Diagram 1: 1st string, 1st fret (F#)  
Diagram 2: 2nd string, 2nd fret (G)  
Diagram 3: 3rd string, 3rd fret (A)  
Diagram 4: 4th string, 4th fret (B)  
Diagram 5: 5th string, 5th fret (C)  
Diagram 6: 6th string, 6th fret (D)  
Diagram 7: 6th string, 7th fret (E)  
Diagram 8: 6th string, 8th fret (F#)

9 Major Scale

Diagram 1: 1st string, 1st fret (F#)  
Diagram 2: 2nd string, 2nd fret (G)  
Diagram 3: 3rd string, 3rd fret (A)  
Diagram 4: 4th string, 4th fret (B)  
Diagram 5: 5th string, 5th fret (C)  
Diagram 6: 6th string, 6th fret (D)  
Diagram 7: 6th string, 7th fret (E)  
Diagram 8: 6th string, 8th fret (F#)

17 Mixolydian mode

Diagram 1: 1st string, 1st fret (F#)  
Diagram 2: 2nd string, 2nd fret (G)  
Diagram 3: 3rd string, 3rd fret (A)  
Diagram 4: 4th string, 4th fret (B)  
Diagram 5: 5th string, 5th fret (C)  
Diagram 6: 6th string, 6th fret (D)  
Diagram 7: 6th string, 7th fret (E)  
Diagram 8: 6th string, 7th fret (F)

25 Dorian mode

Diagram 1: 1st string, 1st fret (F#)  
Diagram 2: 2nd string, 2nd fret (G)  
Diagram 3: 3rd string, 3rd fret (A)  
Diagram 4: 4th string, 4th fret (B)  
Diagram 5: 5th string, 5th fret (C)  
Diagram 6: 6th string, 6th fret (D)  
Diagram 7: 6th string, 7th fret (E)  
Diagram 8: 6th string, 8th fret (F#)



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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