

Modes and tuning

Harmony Signing has developed to support several different aspects of musical learning. Its democratic, social methods contribute to preserving the child's sense of play, which matures into creativity that permits improvisation and composition to emerge. Its focus on sound and fluidity provides the basis for understanding aspects of music theory through practical, multi-sensory activity. And, for many students, Harmony Signing has provided motivation and a secure framework for musical memory and discrimination that helps to overcome fear and misunderstanding in response to aural development and its testing. An aspect of this on which we have yet to focus is the sequence of tones and semitones that make the modal system, and the varied quality of intervallic experience and harmonic anticipation to which the modes give rise.

The modes feature in the sequence of **Video** clips accessible in this website, each of which presents the mode in question in sound and sign that corresponds to their Sol-Fa representation provided here. The modes are all performed over a drone on their first degree so as to maximise the unique harmonic and intervallic character that each possesses. In this notation, the Ionian through to the Phrygian are performed to steps above the original *Doh*, while the Lydian onwards commence in the lower octave.

The Ionian mode is as follows, and captured in **Video 28**:

Doh – Re – Mi – Fa – Soh – La – Ti – Doh^l

This is the Dorian mode (**Video 29**):

Re – Mi – Fa – Soh – La – Ti – Doh^l – Re^l

Next is the Phrygian mode (**Video 30**):

Mi – Fa – Soh – La – Ti – Doh^l – Re^l – Me^l

Here (**Video 31**) is the Lydian mode (celebrated in the song *Lydia* by Gabriel Fauré):

↓Fa – Soh – La – Ti – Doh – Re – Mi – Fa

This is the Mixolydian (**Video 32**):

↓Soh – La – Ti – Doh – Re – Mi – Fa – Soh

This is the Aeolian, favoured by Kodály as the 'natural minor' (**Video 33**):

↓La – Ti – Doh – Re – Mi – Fa – Soh – La

The spooky mood and manner of the Locrian, which rarely operates in its own right (**Video 34**):

↓Ti – Doh – Re – Mi – Fa – Soh – La – Ti

Access through special signs to the unusual harmonic characteristics associated with music in the Phrygian mode in Flamenco are available in [The gestures for moving up a tone or semitone without modulation].