1.4b Modes

Sometimes songs gravitate toward tonics other than 'do' or 'la'. The note 'ti' as a tonic is so rare that for the purposes of this book it will be avoided entirely. This is probably because a triad built on 't' is diminished, and therefore does not provide a sense of resolution. The other modes either have tonic triads that are major or minor, so they fall into categories as either major or minor "flavoured" modes. Some publications print modal melodies in their true key signature, but some will print them as if they were major or minor and then add an accidental to create the mode. Therefore, modes should be understood in both formats.

Here is a list of all 6 standard modes, in order of frequency of occurence, with the major "flavoured" ones on the left, and the minor "flavoured" ones on the right:

Ionian (Major)
d r mf s l td

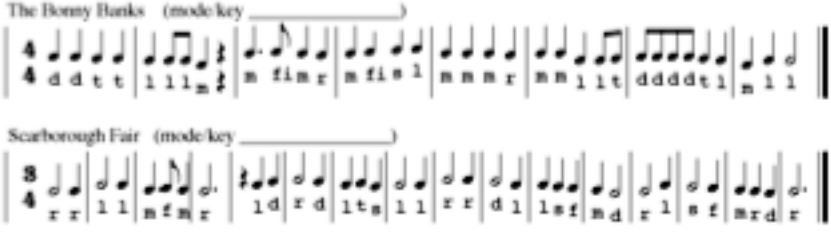
Mixolydian
s l td r mf s
d r mf s lta d

Lydian
f s l td r mf
d r m fis l td

aeolian (natural minor)
l td r mf s l

dorian
r mf s l td r
l td r m fis l

phrygian
mf s l td r m
lta d r mf s l

Exercise 14:

Play each of the following melodies from three different starting pitches.