

Creating Modal music.

Creating a mode

A) Scale structure

Step 1

Choose a series of 12-15 notes. Keep in mind the range of the instrument or singer.

Step 2

Divide them into 3 or 4 sub-groups of notes (tetrachords, pentachords) that can be disjoined or conjunct.

Step 3

Decide which notes will be 'fixed' (cannot be sharpened or flattened during the course of the melody). Fixed notes will also provide the implied harmony of the mode.

B) Modal behavior

Step 4 Assign a descending/ascending modal behavior (will the melody generally move upwards in terms of range or downwards?)

Step 5 Will the scale structure change when the melodic line ascends/descends? Will some tetrachords/pentachords be replaced by others? Will fixed notes 'attract' the other notes of the scale system? Will some notes be omitted?

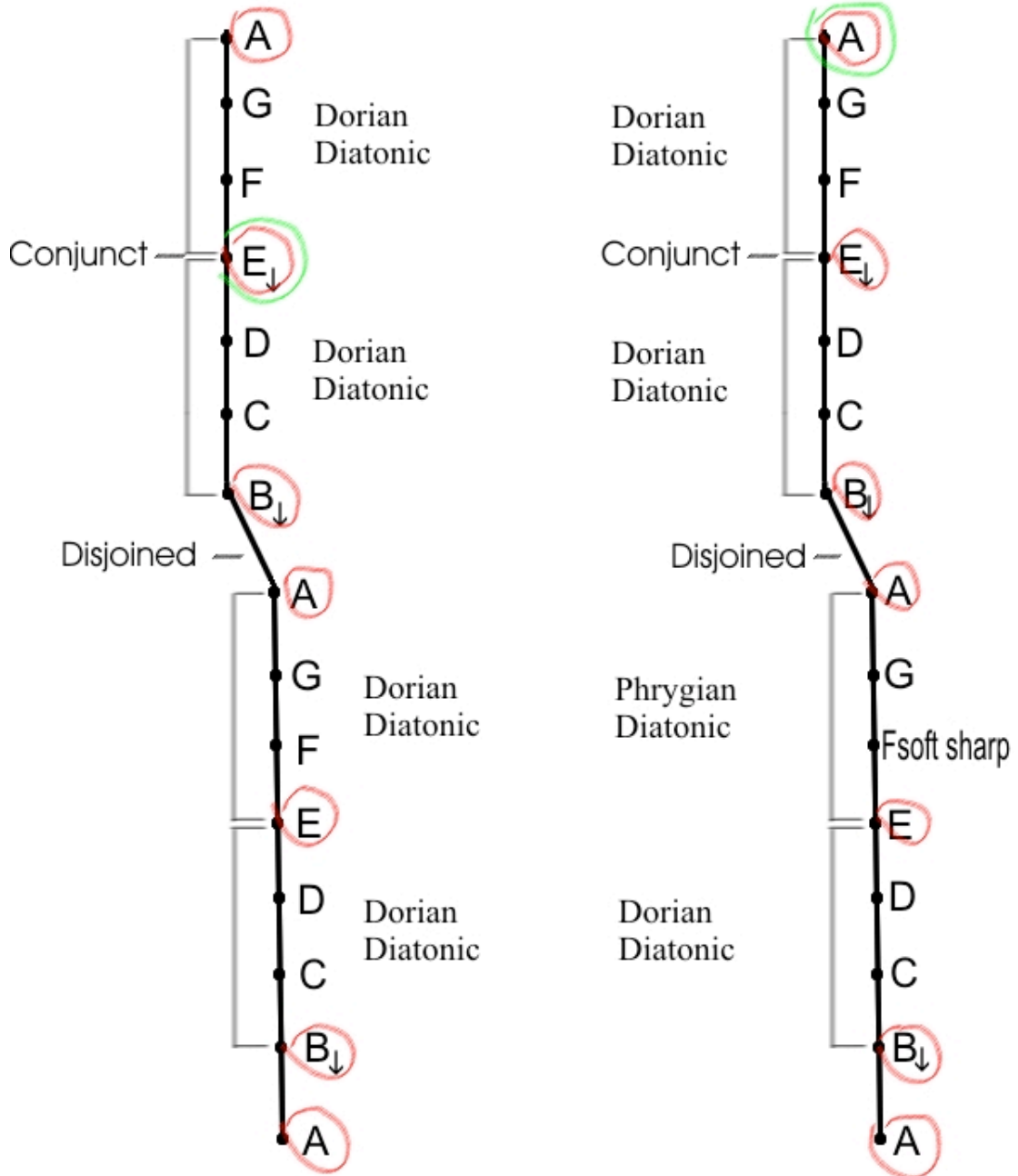
Step 6 Will there be 'prominent' notes in the mode? (melodic phrases will frequently evolve around them)

EXAMPLE

Notes with a red circle around them are fixed notes. Notes with green and red circles are prominent.

Descending scale

Ascending scale



List of tetrachords

Dorian Diatonic: semitone-tone-tone

Phrygian Diatonic: tone-semitone-tone

Lydian Diatonic: tone-tone-semitone

Dorian Chromatic: semitone-semitone-minor third

Phrygian Chromatic: minor third-semitone-semitone

Lydian Chromatic: semitone-minor third-semitone

Dorian Enharmonic: quartertone-quartertone-major third

Phrygian Enharmonic: major third-quartertone-quartertone

Lydian Enharmonic: quartertone-major third-quartertone