



## Lydian Tracks Pt. 1

A path to Modal improvising

By Ted Eschliman

### Continuing with modes

Last time, we explored the subject of **Modal Jazz** <http://mandolinsessions.com/dec08/Eschliman.html>, mentioning how this approach to improvising would be very familiar to the folk musician. One of the big-picture goals in this column is to strip away the intimidation that goes along with soloing in the jazz genre. Experimenting

with the **Dorian** mode should not be much of a stretch from jamming on a friendly fiddle tune. This time, we want to look at a mode not quite as frequent in Folk/Bluegrass, but quite common to jazz, the **Lydian Scale**.

You can have a lot of fun with this scale, and it's very simple to understand. Take a **major scale**, G for example: **G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G**. All you do is raise the 4th scale degree, **G, A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G**. How cool is that sound! Stop reading a few moments and play the G Lydian; if you're up to it, try improvising only on these notes. Below we've listed the **G Lydian**, as well as the **Bb Lydian**.

The image displays musical notation for two Lydian scales on a mandolin. The top system is for G Major. It shows the G Major Scale (G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G) and the G Major Scale with the 4th degree raised (G, A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G). The bottom system is for Bb Major. It shows the Bb Major Scale (Bb, C, D, Eb, E, F, G, Bb) and the Bb Major Scale with the 4th degree raised (Bb, C, D, E, E, F, G, Bb). Both systems include treble clef, key signature, and fretboard diagrams with fingerings.

### Hear it in context

In our recently released book "**Getting Into Jazz Mandolin**," we introduce an exercise (Lydian DUDU) to help familiarize your fingers with **Lydian Scale** patterns. We want to give you a teaser of what you can do further with modal skills, so we're offering a sneak peak at the above song, "**Lydia O'Lydia**" that incorporates the **Modal** concept into some remedial improvisation. We also have some examples of this tune recorded, along with some excellent demonstrations, if you'd like to get this in your ear. First the tune:

# Lydia O'Lydia

Slow, steady Latin

(Major scale with a raised 4th)

Ted Eschliman

G Maj7

Note: Feel free to start incorporating open strings in the literature, again...

4-5-4-5-4-0 5 2 4 2 4-5-4-5-4-0 5 0

5 4-5-4-5-4-0 5 2 4 2 0 2 5 0 4 7 2 3

9 0 1 3 1 0 5 3 0 1 0 3 0 1 3 1 0 3 5 3


13 0 1 3 1 0 5 3 0 1 0 3 1 3 5 0 3 5


17 4 5 4 5 4 0 5 2 4 2 4 5 4 5 4 0 5 0

21 4 5 0 2 3 5 3 2 0 3 4 2 4 5 4 5 4 0 5

You can download a better copy of the tune in a PDF file:  
[http://www.jazzmando.com/print/GJM\\_Lydia%20O'Lydia.pdf](http://www.jazzmando.com/print/GJM_Lydia%20O'Lydia.pdf)

Hear it:

Shortcut audio link:  [Will Patton; Lydia O'Lydia: http://jazzmando.com/sound/WP\\_Lydia.mp3](http://jazzmando.com/sound/WP_Lydia.mp3)

Shortcut audio link:  [Don Julin; Lydia O'Lydia: http://www.jazzmando.com/sound/DJ\\_Lydia.mp3](http://www.jazzmando.com/sound/DJ_Lydia.mp3)

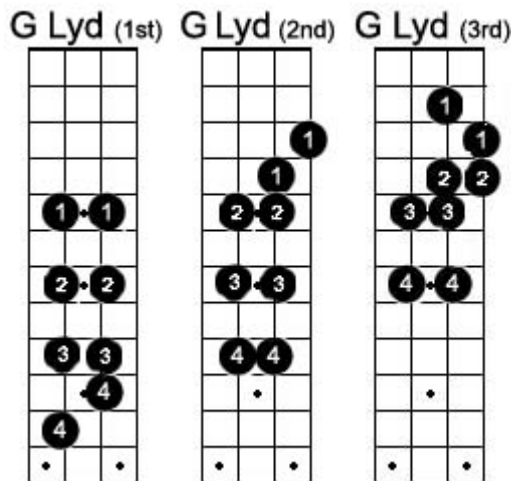
Shortcut audio link:  [Don Stiernberg; Lydia O'Lydia :http://jazzmando.com/webtracks/DS\\_LydiaO.mp3](http://jazzmando.com/webtracks/DS_LydiaO.mp3)

Shortcut audio link:  [Craig Schmoller; Lydia O'Lydia :http://jazzmando.com/sound/CS\\_Lydia.mp3](http://jazzmando.com/sound/CS_Lydia.mp3)

Listen to more audio tracks for Mel Bay's "**Getting Into Jazz Mandolin**": [Webtracks](#)

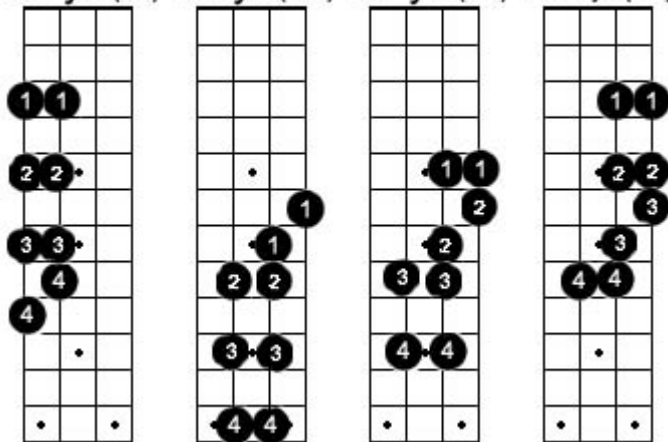
## From Ears to Fingers

Now that you've heard this we want to give you some fretboard paths to self-discovery. If you're completely new to the **FFcP** you might take a few moments to at least breeze through a crash course in the concepts of **Closed Finger** transposability at the JazzMando site (<http://jazzmando.com/ffcp.shtml>), but the idea is to be able to start a scale, or in this case a mode and move it up to different areas of the fretboard. This gives you a whole new level of flexibility in playing, not to mention comfort in improvising out of the first few frets of the mandolin. These would be three possibilities for the **G Lydian Scale**:



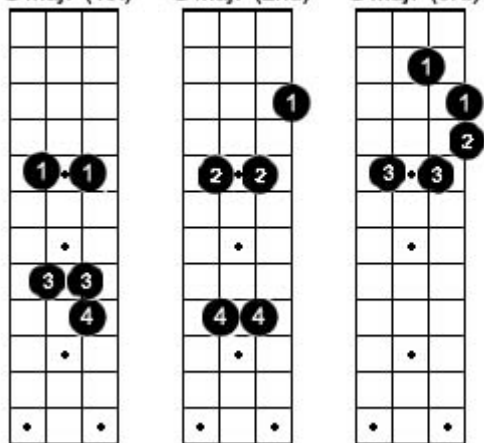
Taking the same **FFcP** concept, here's what you can do with 4 different **FFcP** patterns for the **Bb Lydian Scale**. Note, we left the **4th FFcP** out of the G; you could play it way up on the higher frets, but it isn't necessarily practical:

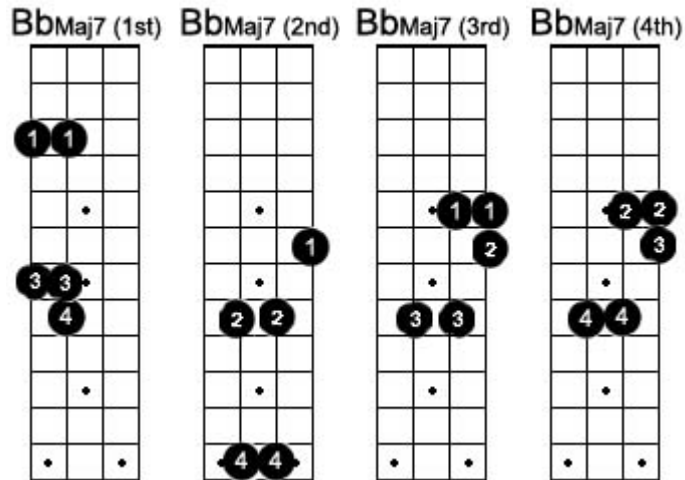
**Bb Lyd (1st) Bb Lyd (2nd) Bb Lyd (3rd) Bb Lyd (4th)**



Scalular playing is a great way to step into improvising, but eventually, you want to be able to emphasize or linger on the "good notes," or the ones that make up the chord. With **G Maj7**, you'd want to use **G, B, D, F#**, and with **Bb Maj7** you'd use **Bb, D, F, E**. Another tool to conceptualize this is to take the same **FFcP** approach and spread arpeggiated versions up the fretboard. Getting familiar with these areas of chordal significance will help you communicate the harmonic implications of the song more effectively. Here are your possibilities:

**GMaj7 (1st) GMaj7 (2nd) GMaj7 (3rd)**





Play around with these for now, and listen to some of the artist tracks to get an idea where you can go from here. One very important tone we've left out is that **raised 4th** (or **#11** if you're already ahead of us), **C#** in the key of **G**, and **E natural** in **Bb**. Next time, in **Part 2** we want to incorporate that critical color tone in our patterns to make it truly "Lydian-esque." Sneak peak, though--try playing the arpeggiated Chords **DMaj7** in **G**, and **FMaj7** in **Bb**. You'll have some new color working around those chords.

*Stay tuned...*



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