



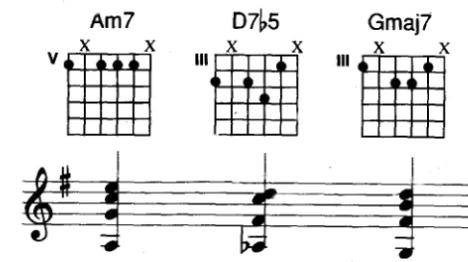
# Progressive Music and Beyond

A discussion with Ivan Bertolla

## Modes And What To Do With Them

A few months ago I showed you modes and how they create different color in music. This month I want to show you how to actually apply the modes into practice via modal chord progressions.

Mode	Spelling	Where To Use Them
Ionian	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Maj7, Maj9, Maj11, Chord progressions I-IV-V, I-ii-V,
Dorian	1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7	Min 7 <sup>th</sup> , Min 9 <sup>th</sup> , Min 13 <sup>th</sup> Chord progressions i-IV, i-ii
Phrygian	1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 b7	Chord progressions i-bII, i-bII-bIII
Lydian	1 2 3 #4 5 6 7	Maj7#11, Maj 7b5, Maj9#11
Mixolydian	1 2 3 4 5 6 b7	Dominant 7 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup>
Aeolian	1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7	Chord progressions i-iv, i-bVI
Locrian	1 b2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7	Minor 7 <sup>th</sup> flat 5 chords



Here is an example of a chord progression based around V-I in G. You will notice that the point of this was to create a smooth chromatic movement in the bass (A, G#, G). This could have only happened using the flat5 in the bass. Therefore it is an example of how an altered chord has multiple functions (color and movement) in chordal progressions.

The table shows some examples of chords, and chords progressions that would match the mode harmonically. Lets look at say the E Phrygian mode (E F G A B C D). The chord progressions i-bII, i-bII-bIII generate Em-F and Em-F-G. I always get asked by students "The music I am writing is boring. How can I expand my musical palette". My answer is

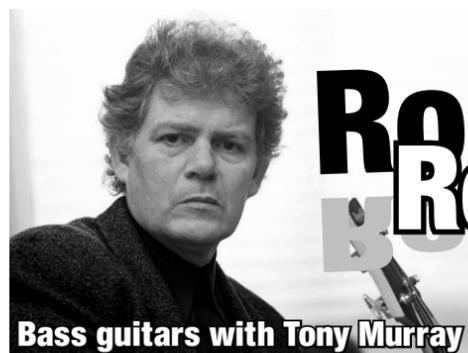
1/ Diatonic Harmony (check out previous columns on this subject) and 2/ modes.

I would suggest starting to write out simple chord progressions like the above and writing a melody using the relevant modes and chord progressions. This will immediately trigger ideas for you as a composer let alone guitar soloist.

## Voice Leading With Altered Chords

An altered chord includes notes that, do not belong in the key. The 2 most used altered notes are the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>. Most guitarists reading this would know the 7#9 chord. And most of you probably play it in a static way (without any chromatic movement to the next chord). I would like to give the thinking guitarist some new possibilities on how to approach altered chords. When I use altered chords I think like a composer that scores music for a choir. In other words by voice leading. In other words I look for smooth movement between chords via inversions. Also I try and avoid huge leaps between each voice.

Ivan Bertolla is a Melbourne Based composer/producer/guitar instructor who has released his debut CD worldwide of Cinematic music "Beyond The Skies Eternity". He runs Mastermind Productions and Macleod Guitar School. Website [www.bertolla.com](http://www.bertolla.com)



Bass guitars with Tony Murray

# Rocking the Foundation

## Chapter 3: MUSIC AND WORDS

This time we're going to look at two examples in which the bass line moves from its most common position at the root of the chord into other areas – and the implications of this wayward behaviour!

In heavy metal and hard rock, country and folk music, and the beginnings and ends of most classical pieces before the twentieth century, the bass note is usually the root of the chord. When the bass moves to another note of the chord, say the third, fifth or seventh, we have what are called the first, second and third inversions of the chord. Not surprisingly these sound different from root position chords and have different uses – let's check some of these out.

In Example 1 above the bass line maintains effectively the same note while the chords above it move, and it is the changing relationship between the bass and the notes above which drives the music.

Note: the key here is A, although the A chord only appears under particular circumstances as we shall see. The first chord is in root position as usual, an E9 chord with E in the bass. At this point we're stable, we're solid, we know where we are. The next chord is an augmented chord, moving us into a more ambiguous harmonic area despite the bass remaining on E (the intervals of this chord are all equal, which means the root could equally well be C or G#). Then comes a third inversion F#min 7: to the ear it follows logically the augmented chord, but in the direction of further vagueness of harmony, far from the root position chord we started with. Then we move right off the planet with a chord which has no notes in common with the bass line, the Bmin7. You will hear that the cumulative effect of these movements is to create more and more tension as the ultimate goal

EX 1

EX 2

E<sup>9</sup> E<sup>+</sup> F<sup>#</sup>m7 Bm7 A/E E<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>/F Dm/F Gm E<sup>b</sup>maj7

EX 1

EX 2

E<sup>9</sup> E<sup>+</sup> F<sup>#</sup>m7 Bm7 A/E E<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>/F Dm/F Gm E<sup>b</sup>maj7

seems to get further away. And what is the ultimate goal? The A chord, of course, and here it comes next, but with an excruciating twist – it has that damned E in the bass, making it a second inversion chord (E, A, C#) and withholding resolution still. Until, finally, the E in the bass resumes its place as the root of the final chord of the cadence and makes sense of the whole progression.

Example 2 shows an unusual case in mainstream pop music of a progression which begins with a second inversion chord, followed by a first inversion chord, before moving to root position chords. Furthermore this underlies the actual title line of the song, 'What Becomes of the Brokenhearted'. What is the point of this flouting of one of the iron laws of pop – no inversions on the hook line of the song(!)? The

answer lies in the lyrics. The chorus line goes: Dm/F Bb/F What becomes of the brokenhearted Eb maj7 Gm Who had love, that's now departed...

The apex or goal of this line, of this idea, is the G min chord on 'who had love'. This chord accompanies the big moment of tragedy and sadness – in root position for maximum impact. The two chords preceding it are not in root position, creating a harmonic uncertainty which enhances the idea of questioning ("what becomes...") and makes the G min chord that much more effective when it comes.

The relationship between lyrical content and harmony in pop music is often tenuous, but every now and then words and music come together in the

most affecting way, as in this example.

Next time we'll widen the harmonic horizon further still and consider some implications!

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## BIO

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