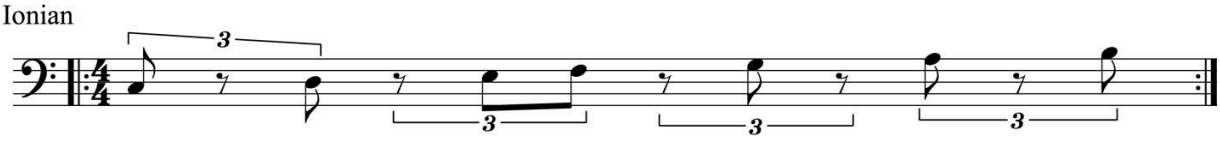
As you can see, things got a little tricky on that last one. You should have a pretty good idea of just how much we can do with a little creative thinking about rhythm and harmony through changes.

I'd like to share something extremely creative that the phenomenal bassist Franc O'Shea (www.francoshea.com) wrote in an article for the May 2011 issue of UK magazine *Bass Guitar*. This illustrates just how inventive you can get with rhythm in your practice.

While I can't remember what he called the concept, I call it "**12 Tones and 12 Beats**." I love this concept and have explored a myriad of ways in which to employ it in my practice. The essence is this: There are 12 notes in the chromatic scale, and if we assign each note in the chromatic scale a rhythmic value, then every scale has a different rhythm to it (every note in the chromatic scale that doesn't belong in the mode we are working with becomes a rest).

Let's start by using eighth-note triplets because this also gives us 12 beats per measure. Using this premise, the C major scale would have this rhythm.

Ionian



What was most interesting to me and to my ears is that many of the rhythms of the major scale sounded like various common Afro-Cuban percussion rhythms when played fast. One student and I had a particularly good time exploring this. We would pick a scale, one of us would play a bass line in the rhythm of that scale, and the other soloed in that tonality. Then, whenever it felt right, one of us would call out a new scale and root ("G Lydian," for example) and at the end of our phrase, we would switch tonalities and rhythms and change roles (with the soloist now playing bass, and vice-versa). This works for any scale with any number of notes. A pentatonic scale would simply have more rests, for example and a symmetrical diminished scale would have fewer rests.

Here are a few examples of various scales and the rhythms associated with them in the following pages. We'll start with the major scale modes.

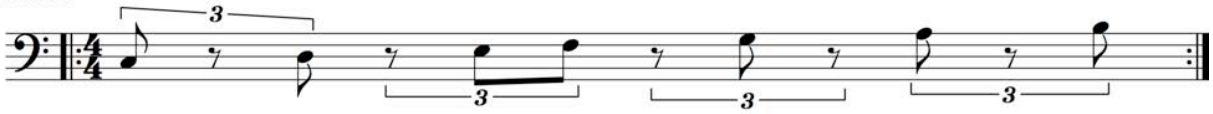
REMEMBER: Each scale will end on the 7th degree. Most of us are used to repeating the root at the end of the scale, but this would be the beginning of the repeated rhythm.

12 Tones & 12 Beats

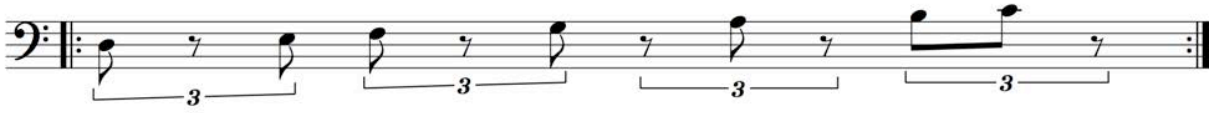
Major Modes in the Key of C

Damian Erskine

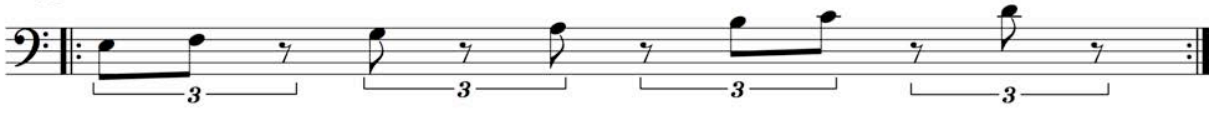
Ionian



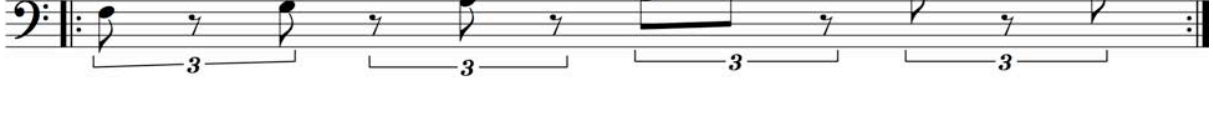
Dorian



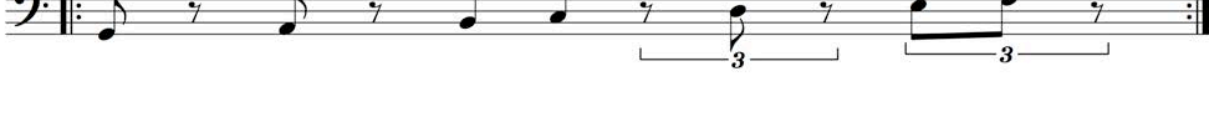
Phrygian



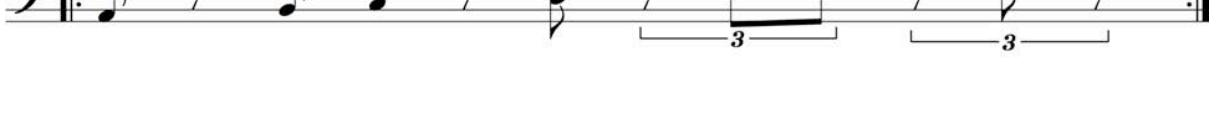
Lydian



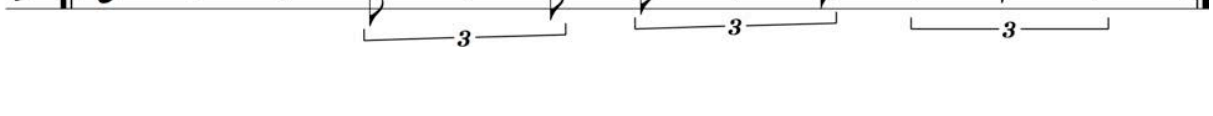
Mixolydian



Aeolian



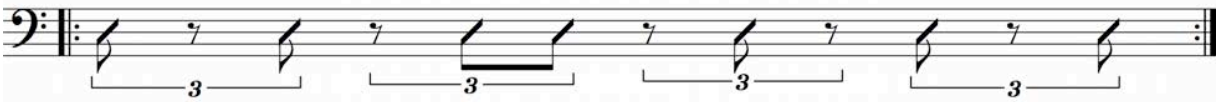
Locrian



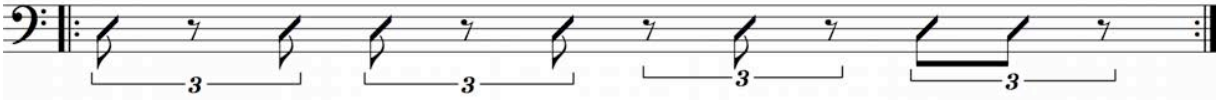
12 Tones & 12 Beats

Rhythm Only

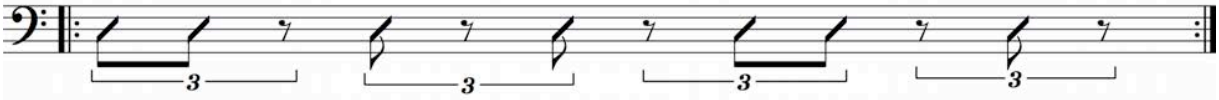
Ionian



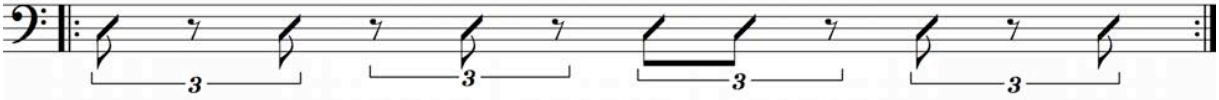
Dorian



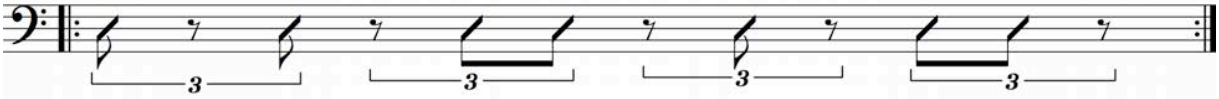
Phrygian



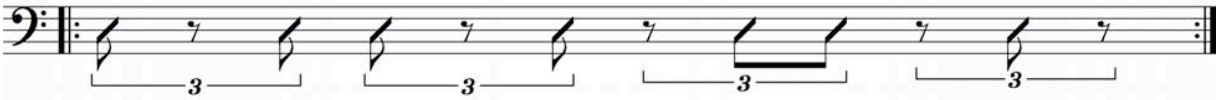
Lydian



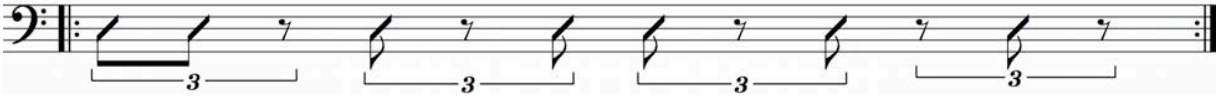
Mixolydian



Aeolian



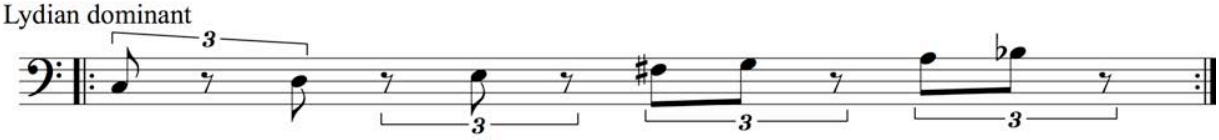
Locrian



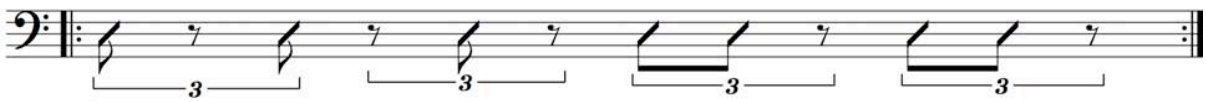
12 Tones & 12 Beats

Miscellaneous Scales

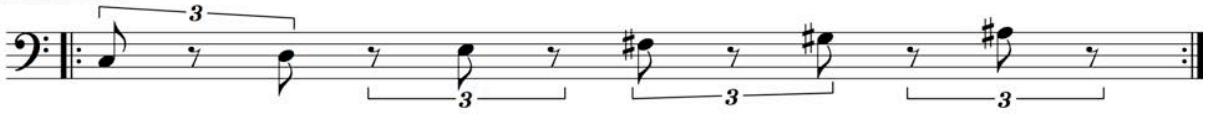
Lydian dominant



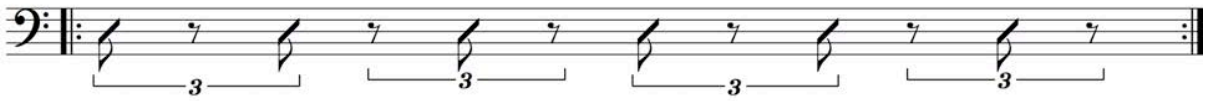
Lydian dominant rhythm



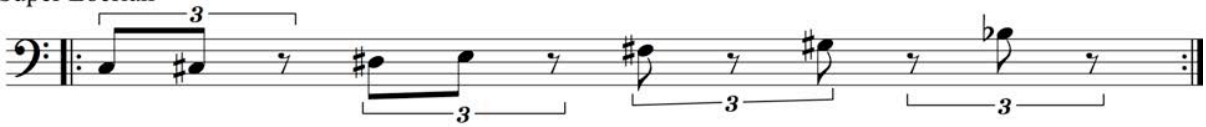
Whole-tone



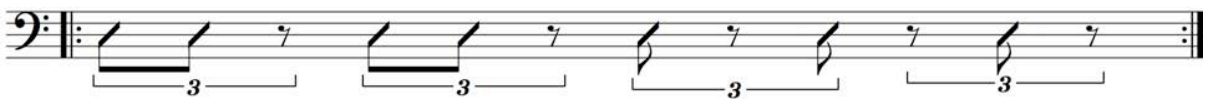
Whole-tone rhythm



Super Locrian

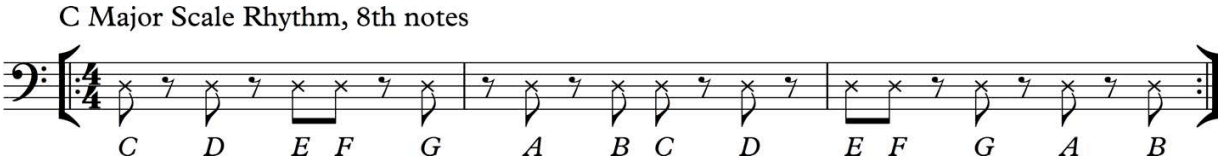


Super Locrian rhythm



Utilizing the modes of the major, melodic minor, and harmonic minor scales gives us a wealth of rhythms to play with.

So far, we've only even used eighth-note triplets as our parent rhythm thus far. If we choose another rhythm, things get interesting because (in 4/4) the rhythmic phrases will repeat at different places in the bar. In other words, using eighth notes, each scale takes a bar and a half before it repeats. This gives us a three-bar rhythmic phrase before it starts again on the "1."



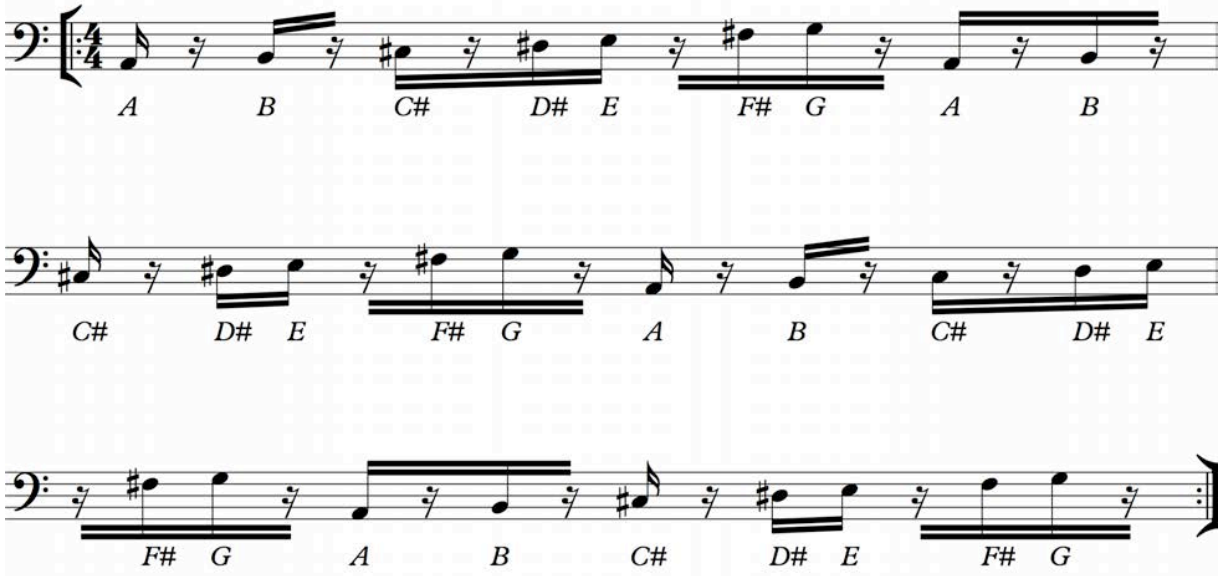
This opens up a world of possibilities (especially when we begin to work with them on "odd" meters!

Some parent rhythms may take fewer or more bars before repeating from the "1" and some (like the example in B minor you will see in a few pages) can be VERY hard to play well. The real idea here is that this is yet one more tool in your belt with regard to devising exercises to challenge yourself.

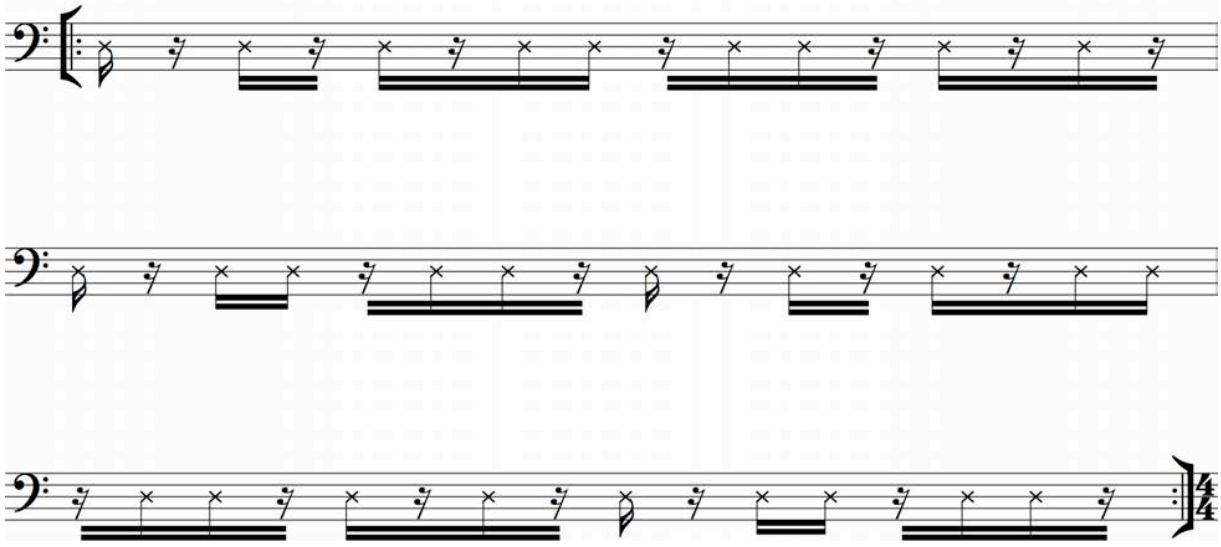
I like to play with these rhythms while practicing chord scales through chord changes *SLOWLY*. This is not a place to start while you are still internalizing chord scales, but a way to "up the ante" just a bit once you've gotten comfortable with some of them.

Here are a few other arbitrary examples to get you going with this (not so) basic premise.

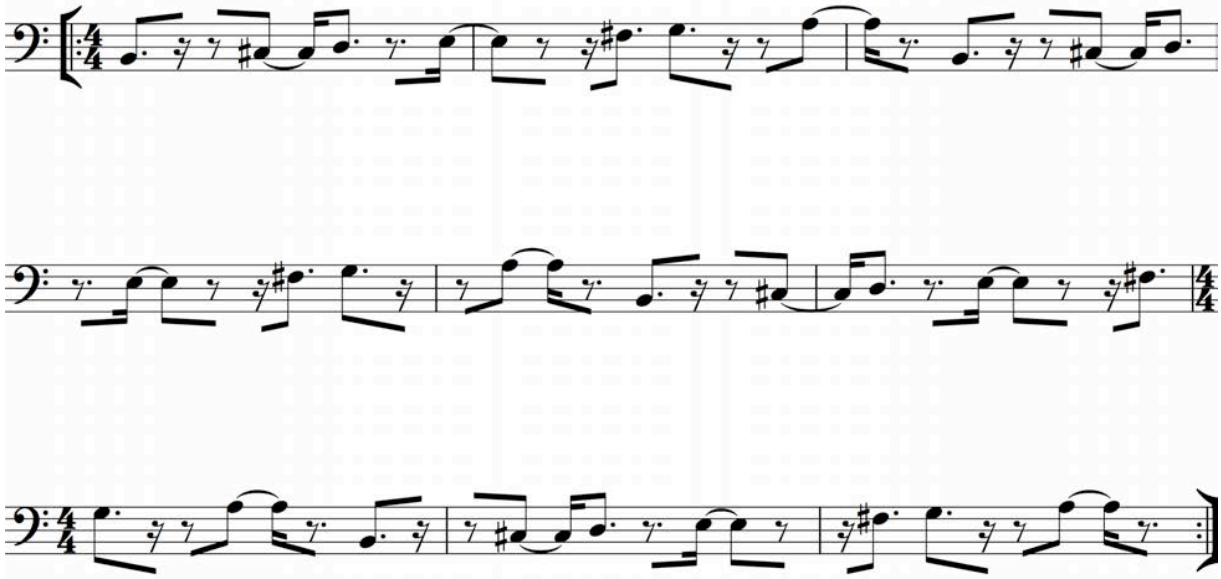
A Lydian dominant, 16th notes



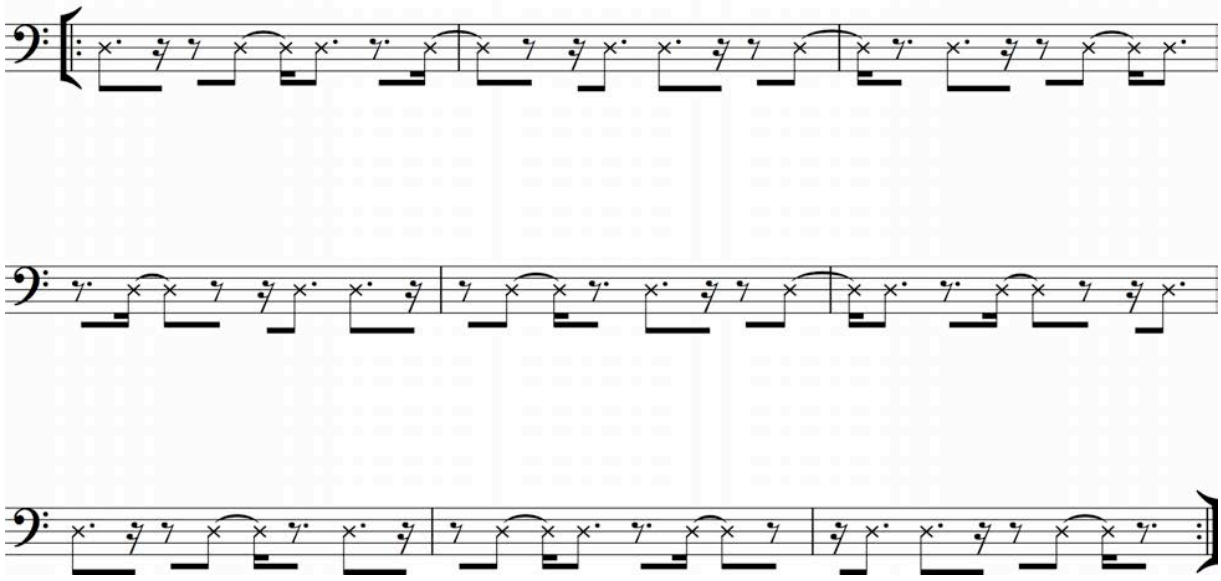
A Lydian dominant, 16th notes (rhythm only)

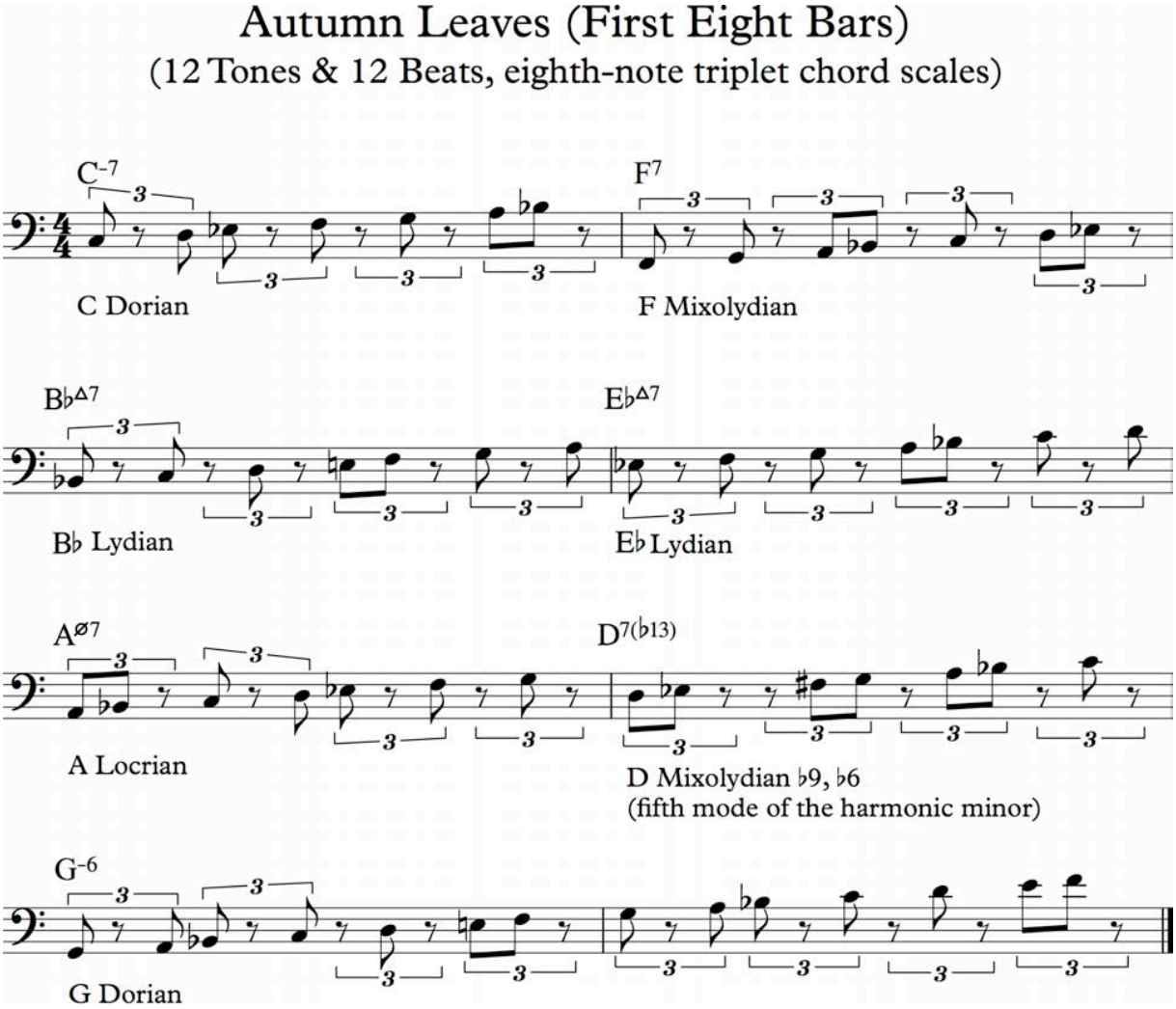


B Aeolian (minor), dotted 8th notes



B Aeolian (minor), dotted 8th notes (rhythm only)



As I mentioned earlier, one other way I've thought of to employ this rhythmic device while practicing is to incorporate it into chord scale practice through chord changes. This requires that you play through changes VERY slowly. When using a play-along, I usually set the tempo to around 75bpm for a tune with ONE chord per bar. If the tune has two chords per bar, you might want to go as low as 40bpm! Take it as slow as is necessary to play it correctly. It takes time to think about the space in between notes and translate that into rhythm. This is especially true when using a chord scale with more than a whole step in between some scale degrees. THIS IS TRICKY STUFF! Don't get discouraged if you get confused. Just take your time and play with the concept. Build it slowly and experiment.

Here is what the first eight bars of "Autumn Leaves" might look like: