



John Petrucci *Wild Stringdom* Dominating The Fretboard Mastering the Lydian-dominant scale

Last month, we talked about using the Lydian scale to solo over a non-diatonic major chord in a progression. But suppose you're working on a tune that uses one or more non-diatonic dominant-seven chords (b7, 9, 13, b7b5, 9#11, 13#11). What would be the scale of choice then? Well, it would be the Lydian-dominant scale, the focus of this month's lesson.

The Lydian-dominant (also known as the "Lydian flat-seventh") scale is simply a Lydian scale with a lowered seventh (or, to look at it another way, a Mixolydian scale with a raised fourth). For those of you who are theory-minded, it can also be thought of as the fourth mode of the melodic-minor scale. Looking at FIGURE 1, you'll notice that the C Lydian-dominant scale is identical to the G melodic-minor scale starting on the fourth degree (C).

FIGURE 1 C Lydian-dominant scale
G melodic-minor

FIGURE 2 (C7)

5-7-8 5-7-8 5-6-8 5-7-8 5-6-8

8 5-7-9 5-7-8 5-7-8 5-6-8

AUDIO FILES FIGURE 1 (130 bpm)

[AIFF Audio File](#) (Macintosh)

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AUDIO FILES FIGURE 2 (130 bpm)

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Though this scale may be a little difficult to "hear" right off the bat, the more you experiment with it, the more you'll come to appreciate its richness and depth. A good way to learn this scale's sound is to create a pattern that emphasizes the Lydian-dominant tonality and compose lines with it. One particular favorite pattern of mine is the six-note idea depicted in FIGURE 2. It captures the essence of the Lydian-dominant sound, namely the third (E), raised fourth (F#) and lowered seventh (Bb). Once you have this basic shape under your fingers, try coming up with lines using only the notes in the pattern, as in FIGURE 2A.

FIGURE 2A
(C7)

(Tie)

AUDIO FILES FIGURE 2a (108 bpm)

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Keep in mind that you can play this pattern, and all the new licks you've created with it, on two adjacent strings all over the neck.

Once you have the Lydian-dominant sound down, experiment, experiment, experiment! Write as many lines as you can using the Lydian-dominant scale. Granted, some of them will be lame, but you'll be surprised by all the cool ideas you're bound to come up with. FIGURES 3 and 4 are two examples to help get you started.

FIGURE 3
(C7)

FIGURE 4
(C7)
8va.....

AUDIO FILES FIGURE 3 (130 bpm)

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AUDIO FILES FIGURE 4 (100 bpm)

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Now the big question: where would you use this scale in a tune? The rule is simple: whenever there's a non-diatonic dominant chord in a progression, play the Lydian-dominant scale built on the root of the chord over it. Remember to connect your ideas smoothly when you're switching to a chord outside of the key center. Try not to use any intervals greater than a whole-step in either direction at first. As you become more familiar with the scale's sound and visual fretboard patterns, experiment with wider intervals such as thirds, fourths, fifths, etc. Check out FIGURE 5 to see what I mean. Notice how the C9 chord is seamlessly connected to Em and how it effortlessly resolves to Bm.

FIGURE 5

AUDIO FILES FIGURE 5 (100 bpm)

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