

SHREDDED METAL

LYDIAN LICKS

In the last two columns I talked about how to use the Dorian and Locrian modes when writing metal riffs and solos. For this column, I'd like to take a look at another mode – one that doesn't get used all that often in heavy metal – Lydian. To do this, I thought it would be cool to take a look at a real-life example. 'Genesis/Genocide' is one of my own compositions and it features on the new EP *Classified* from Sydney power/thrash band Darker Half (of which I'm currently a member). It's a fast thrash song and the solo section incorporates a number of different modes and tonalities – one of them being Lydian.

EXERCISE 1

Lydian is the fourth mode of the Major scale and its formula is 1-2-3-#4-5-6-7. So essentially, it's a major scale with a raised fourth degree. While overall it's a 'major' mode (since it contains a major third) and thus would appear unsuitable and too 'happy' for heavy metal, the presence of the #4/b5 tritone gives it an eerie and mysterious sound that, I feel, sounds pretty cool in a metal context. Exercise 1 is the rhythm guitar part of an excerpt from the solo section of 'Genesis/Genocide'. It's a fast, alternate picked and palm muted thrash riff in the key of E Lydian. The parent scale here is B major, and so the notes of E Lydian are E-F#-G#-A#-B-C#-D#. Note how the riff is derived entirely of these notes, as it moves through what is essentially a I-IIIIm Lydian chord loop.

Fast Thrash ♩ = 180

1 P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----|

TAB

9 8 9 9 8 9 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

2 P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----|

3 P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----|

4 P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----| P.M.-----|

6 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 4 4 4 4 4 6 4 4 4 4 4 6 4 4 4 4 4

EXERCISE 2

Since the riff is based off E Lydian, obviously Lydian was the most appropriate scale choice to solo over it with. While the full solo from 'Genesis/Genocide' has plenty of fast shredding and technical playing, for this Lydian section I took the opportunity to get my Vai on and play some slow, melodic phrases. Pay particular attention to the expressive techniques used here – slides, bends, vibrato, etc. As I mentioned, while you don't hear Lydian too often in heavy metal riffs and solos, when it's used in this manner I think it can have a great effect.

The image displays a musical score for guitar, consisting of two systems of four measures each. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff, and the guitar tablature (TAB) is written on a six-line staff below it. The TAB includes fret numbers (18, 19, 16, 14, 12) and various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and a '1/2' symbol. The second system continues the melody and includes fret numbers (12, 11, 14) and 'full' markings. The score is labeled 'TAB' in the first system.

You can hear these excerpts online at www.australianguitarmag.com. I've also included the full track so you can hear the solo in context. Check it out!