MODES

Music based on major and minor scales came into common usage in the early 1600s, and of course we have been using them ever since.

Before the 1600s, composers wrote in what were called modes.

As with many things in music theory, the modes can be traced back to the Greeks. The 'in' instrument in ancient Greece was the lyre, it had eight strings, tuned so that the top and bottom notes sounded an octave apart. The tunings of the intermediate strings varied, using different combinations of large and small intervals ('tones' and 'semitones'). The most common of these tunings or 'modes' correspond to the seven scales which you get if you play only on the white notes of the piano.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH ADOPTED THIS GREEK LEADING EDGE MUSIC TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPED IT FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES.

THE TERM MODE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH SCALE. THE MODES ARE ALTERNATIVE SCALES WITH DIFFERENT ORDERS OF WHOLE AND HALF STEPS.

I Don't Practice Lousy Modes A Lot

Ionian	Based on tonic (The Major Scale)	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Dorian	Based on the supertonic	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
Phrygian	Based on the mediant	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
Lydian	Based on the subdominant	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mixolydian	Based on the dominant	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Aeolian	Based on the submediant (The Natural Minor Scale)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
Locrian	Based on the leading tone	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B

THE GREEKS WERE THE ONES TO NAME THE DIFFERENT MODES AFTER ANCIENT GREEK SUBGROUPS; THE LOCRIANS AND THE DORIANS. PHRYGIA AND LYDIA WERE PLACES WITH NON GREEK PEOPLE CLOSE BY.

The following scales are considered "Authentic Modes"

Dorian
Phrygian
Lydian
Mixolydian

An authentic mode sounds like it moves from tonic to tonic (because of its whole step/half step order).

- ❖ Ionian = major
- ❖ Dorian = natural minor with a raised sub-mediant
  (6th scale degree raised a half step)
- ❖ Phrygian = natural minor with a lowered super tonic
  (2nd scale degree is down a half step)
- ❖ Lydian = major with a raised sub dominant
  (4th scale degree is up half a step)
- ❖ Mixolydian = major with sub tonic not leading tone
  (7th scale degree is down half a step)
- ❖ Aeolian = natural minor scale
- ❖ Locrian = natural minor with a lowered super tonic and dominant
 (2nd and 5th scale degree is down half a step)

F Dorian
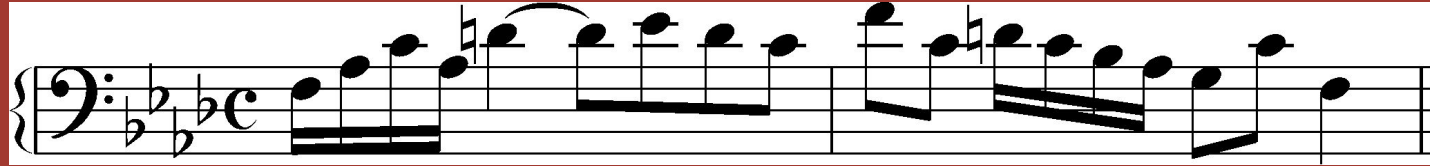
Look for clues to help determine the mode/scale or key a song is based on
- What is the ending pitch?
- Are there accidentals?
- Look for prominent notes (the dominant scale degree of the final note)
- Does it begin and end on a scale degree other than tonic?
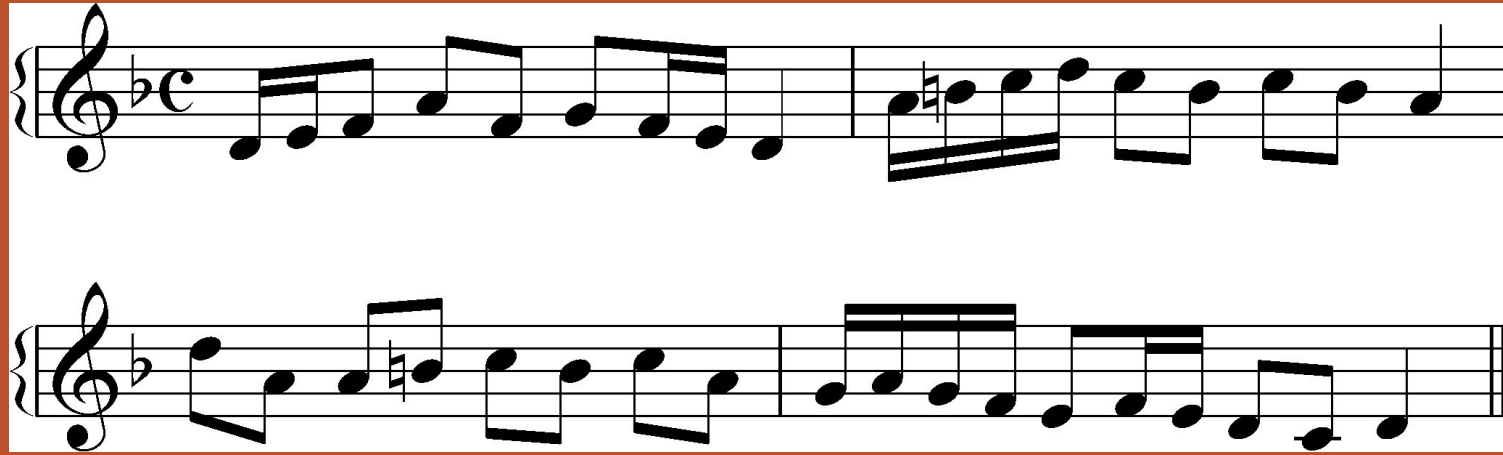
Several clues give away D as an important note in this melody, not least that it begins and ends with a D. Of these the ending note is far more important - melodies do often (but by no means always) end on the key note. The other prominent note in the piece is A which is the dominant (or 5th) of D - an important note to any kind of D scale.
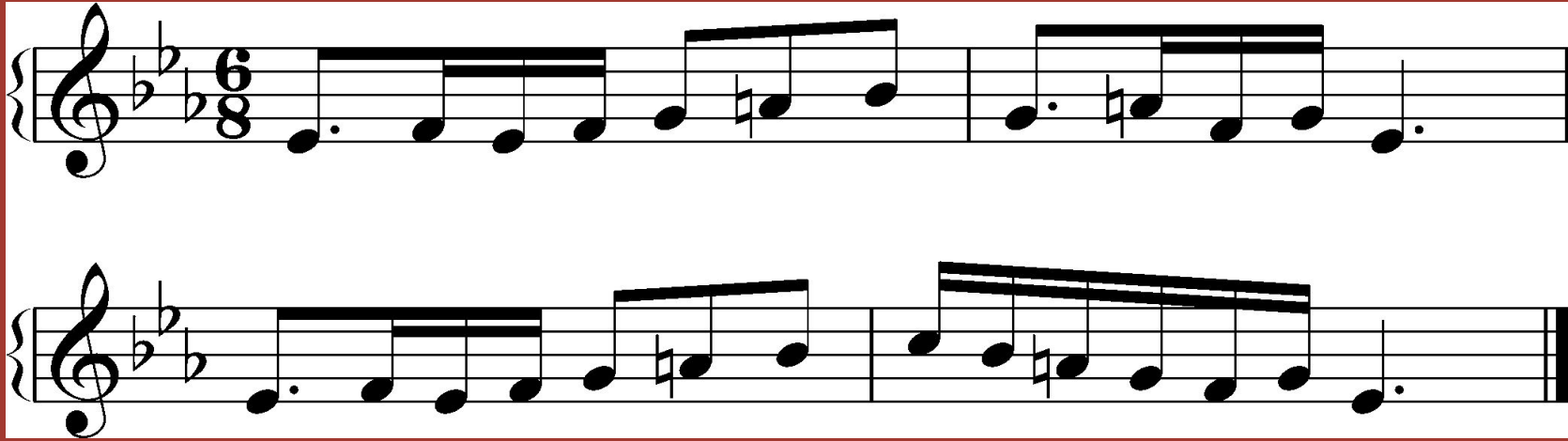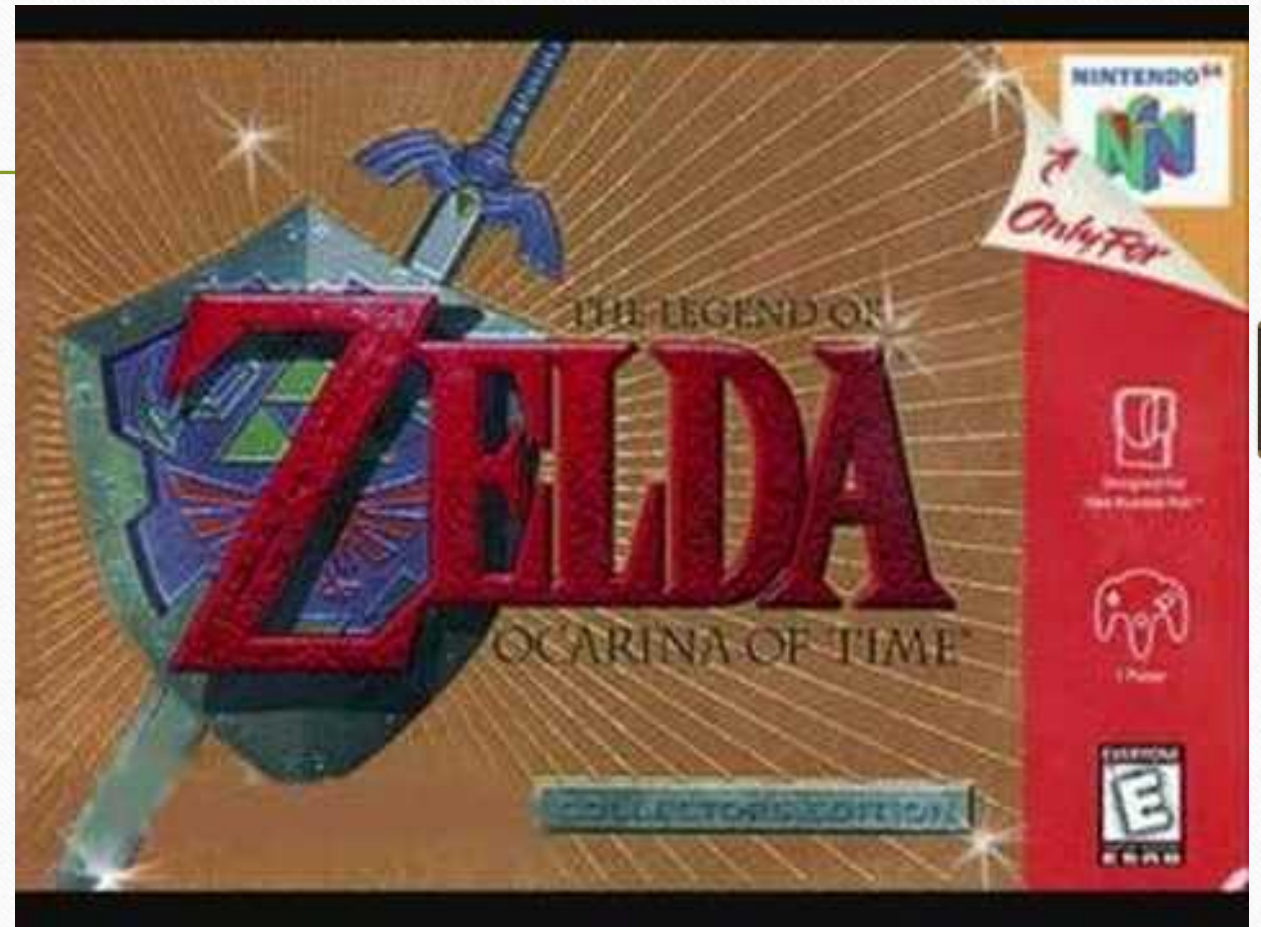
Dorian (D E F G A B C D)

This one is a chantish/worshipful sounding piece. One feature of this particular game which influenced its music: a few songs, including this one, had to be performed by the player on a virtual instrument tuned to the key of C, making relying on alternate modes a natural way to vary the styles of the music.

Phrygian (E F G A B C D E)

Magus's Theme - Chrono Trigger (Super Nintendo). The major scale has a half step from its seventh note to its root, which makes hearing the seventh note slightly tense because you're expecting it to resolve into the root since it's so close. This mode, with a lowered second, has a similar effect in reverse, with a half step leading down into the root. This piece is an intense/dark theme serving as the motif for a sinister yet not entirely evil character.
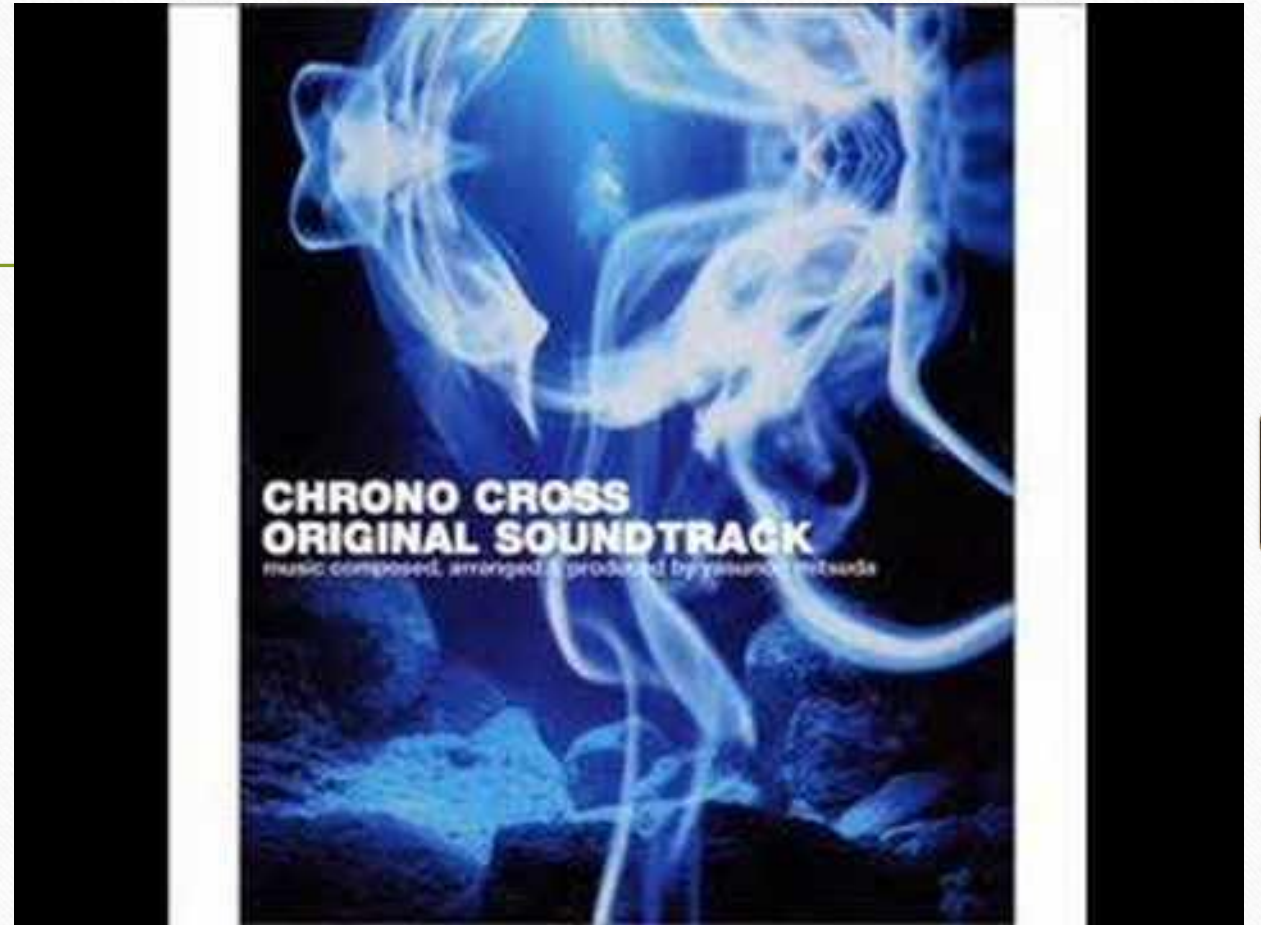
Lydian (F G A B C D E F)

Space Junk Galaxy - Super Mario Galaxy(Wii). Back into major-related territory, this is a mellow piece which, like a lot of these songs, uses an atypical mode to create an ethereal or exotic sound.

Mixolydian (G A B C D E F G)

Home Termina - Chrono Cross(Playstation). This piece serves as the background music for a city in its game, and is meant for a different style of explorative gameplay than most of the others in this set.