



The Phrygian Mode

The Phrygian mode is the third mode of the major scale. In the key of C major, the scale would consist of the following notes -

E **F** **G** A **B** C D

If we take the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th notes of the scale (highlighted in bold), we get a minor 7 chord. This means that we can use the phrygian mode to improvise over a minor 7 chord. There are several scale options when improvising over a minor 7 chord in jazz music. The phrygian mode is used to improvise over chord III in a major key.

The phrygian mode is not used as extensively in jazz music as other modes. If extensions were added to the minor 7th chord, we would get a minor 7b9 chord which to many ears is a very dissonant sound.

The phrygian mode can be used to improvise over a slash chord where the triad is a semitone above the root. For example, we could use E phrygian mode to improvise over the chord **F/E**. This use of the phrygian mode is very common in Flamenco music. It was also used effectively by the jazz arranger Gil Evans on Miles Davis's album 'Sketches Of Spain'.