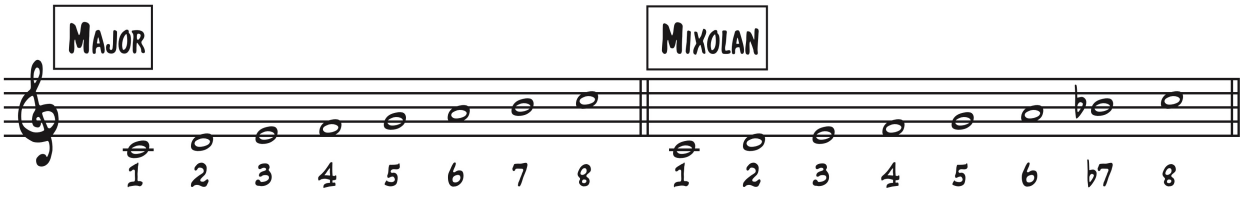
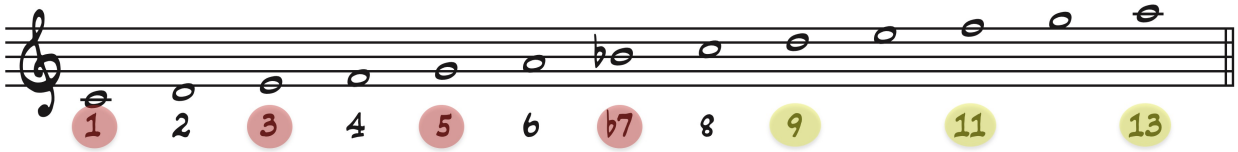
A New View of the Modes: Mixolydian

Old: Mixolydian is the 5th mode of the major scale.
New: To create a mixolydian scale, lower the 7th of the scale See below:



Mixolydian is a **dominant** mode, best used with **dominant 7 chords.** Those chord tones are 1 3 5 ♭7. The extensions possible are 9 11 13.



So, you could use the C mixolydian over chords like C7, C9, C11, C13, C7(sus), C9(sus), or C13(sus). Remember: 4 and 11 are the same note, and sus refers to the 4.

See that B ♭ in the C mixolydian scale above? It's the ONLY flat...just like in the key of F! And, C7 is the V chord (the dominant) in F. That's why mixolydian sounds so "floaty" or unstable. Mixolydians and the tonic chords they are attracted to share the same notes (same key signature.) Good to remember!

Check out these jazz tunes that use a LOT of mixolydian sounds:

- All Blues
- Blue Monk
- Blues in the Closet
- Freddie Freeloader
- Killer Joe
- Maiden Voyage
- Watermelon Man

Pro trick: 2 ways to **nail the sound of the mixolydian:**

- Emphasize the chord tones that define its sound (here, 3 and ♭7) and
- Incorporate those important "color" notes into cool melodic ideas (motifs.)

Pretty soon you'll start to hear these ideas on recordings by your favorite players...AND in your own playing!

Here are some cool "formulas" for mixolydian motifs. You'll see examples on the next page.

4 - 3 - 1 **4 - 3 - 5**
3 - 4 - ♯4 - 5 and **5 - ♭5 - 4 - 3** *(w/ chromatic passing note!)*
♭7 - 6 - 5 **♭7 - 8 - 9 - 8** **9 - 8 - ♭7 - 8**

Get the sound of these in your head, and learn them in all keys.

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Mike Dana

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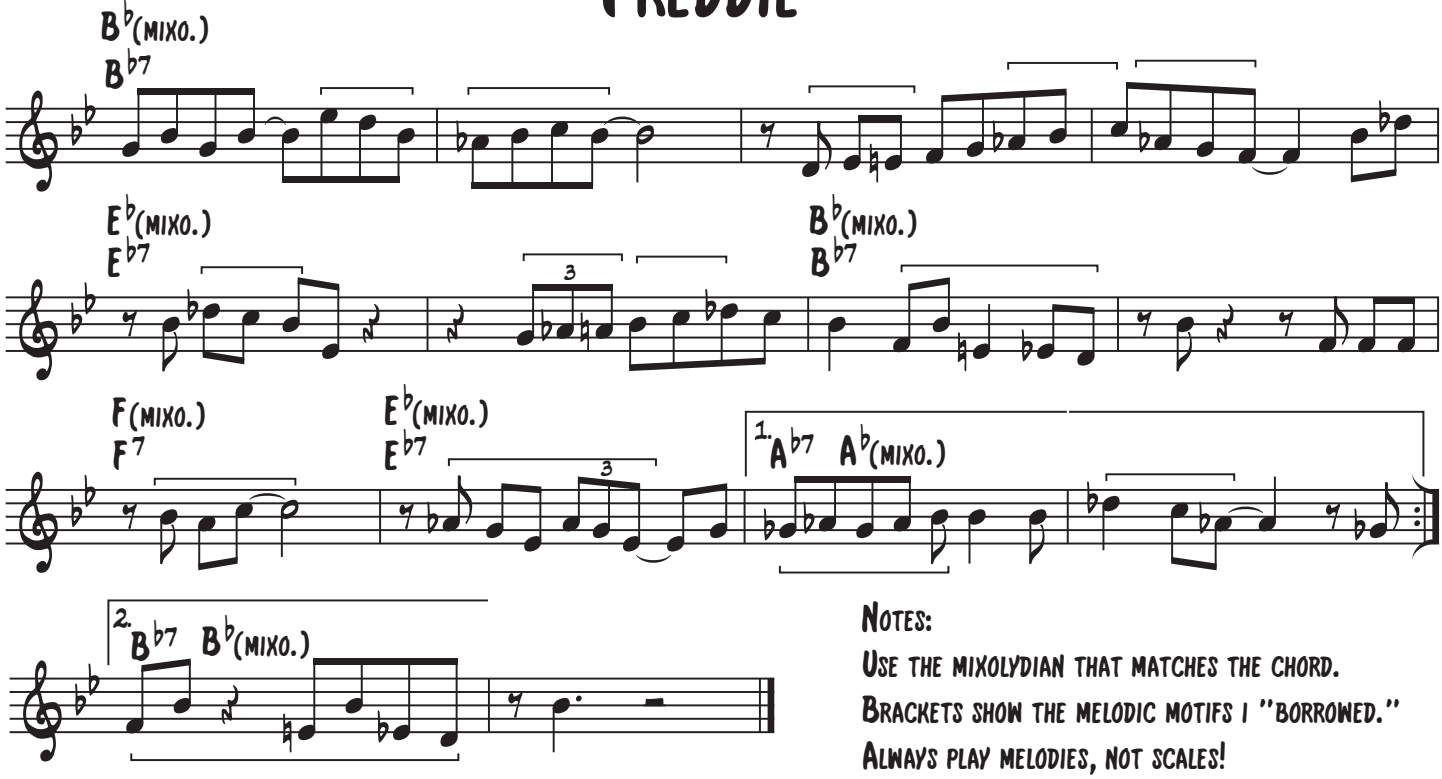
Freddie



Notes:

Use the mixolydian that matches the chord.

Brackets show the melodic motifs I "borrowed."

Always play melodies, not scales!

Mike Dana

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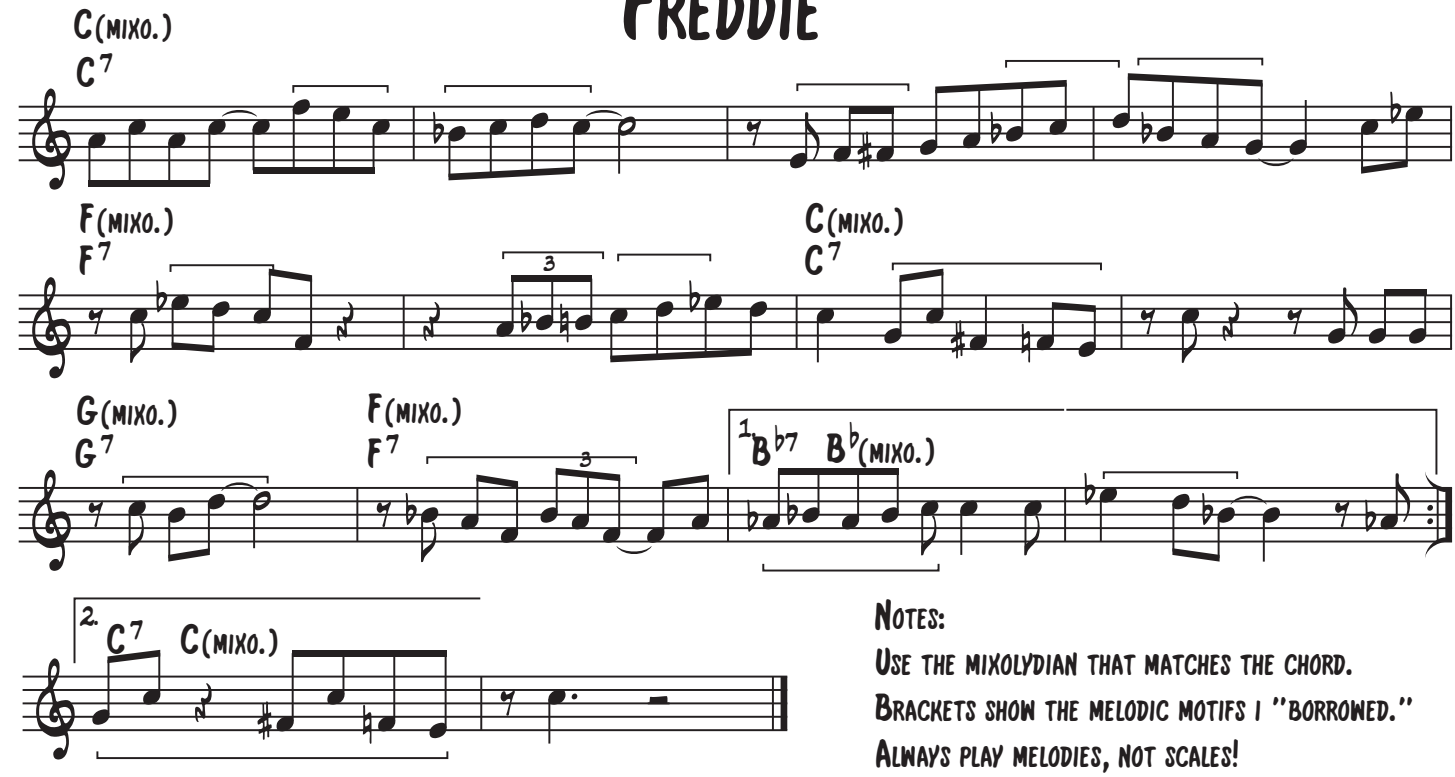
Freddie



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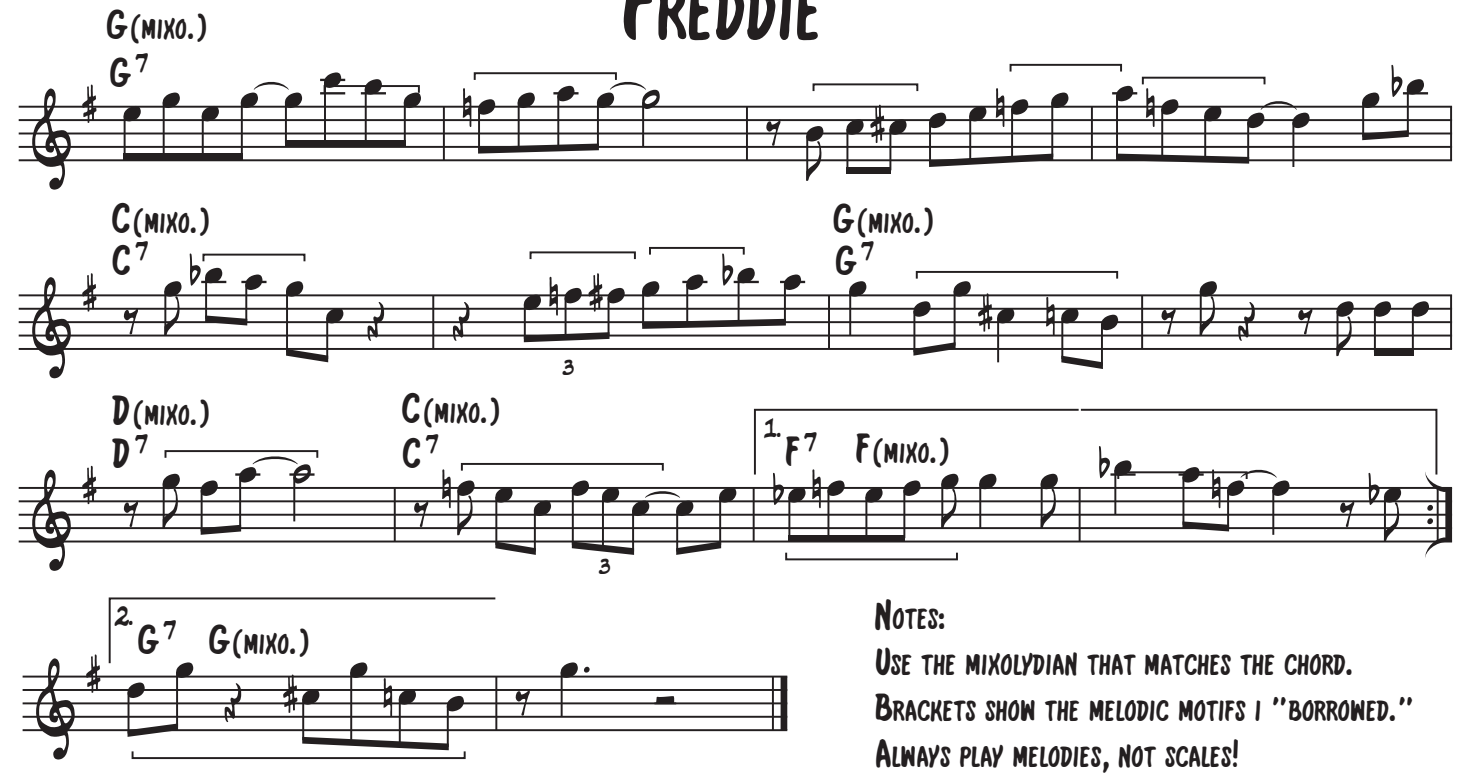

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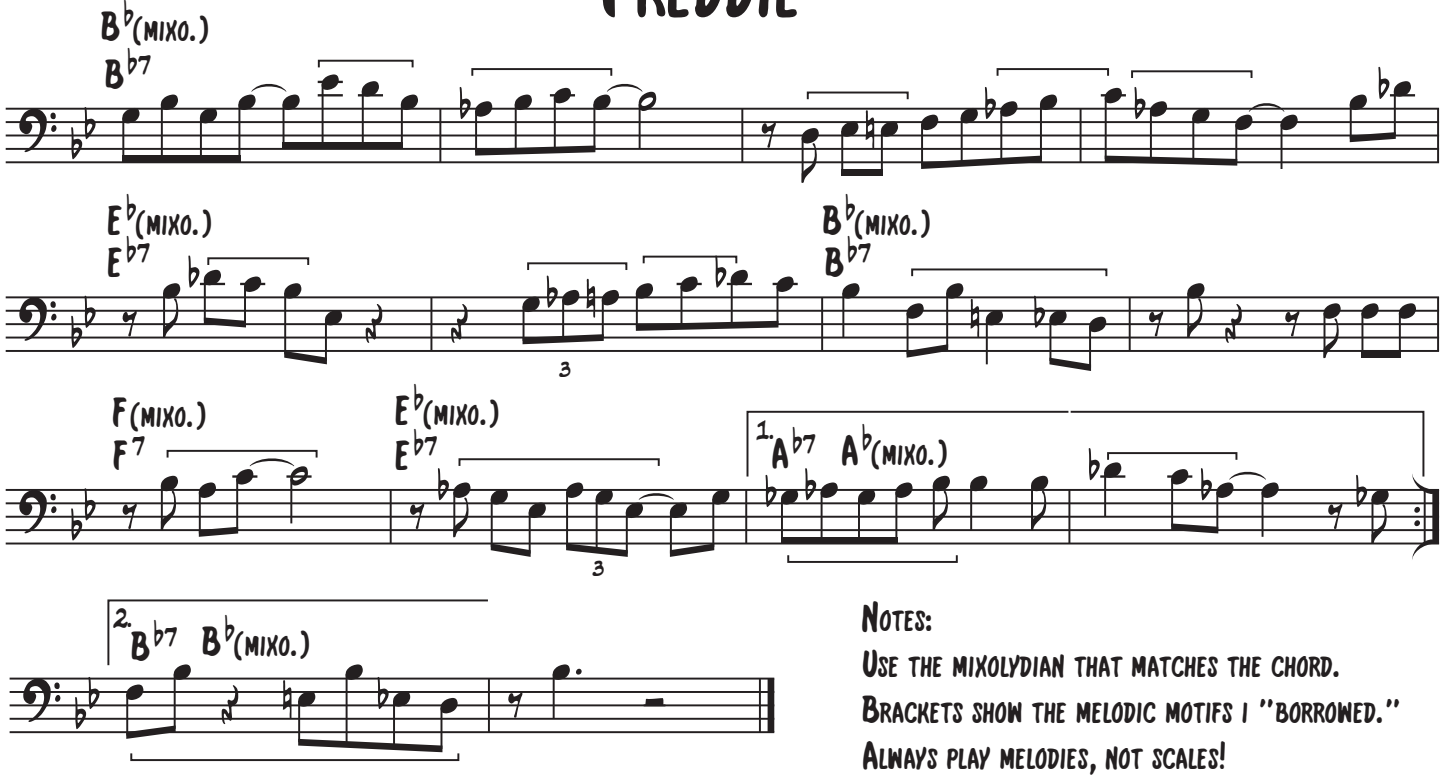

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