

The elusive "F flat" Harmonic Minor Scale



Closing Argument

Several guitar teachers who I know commented that there seems to be an awful lot of material in Book 1. My reply was: "There are a lot of things to learn to become a good guitar player."

A common question from prospective new students is: "How long will it take me to learn to play the guitar?" My most terse answer is: "It has taken me a lifetime, so I don't think that you can do it any more quickly." The more polite and conservative answer is: "It will certainly take you some months of effort just to get through the basic fundamentals if you work hard at it."

Another question is: "Do I have to learn every exercise and song in this book before I move on to something else?" The answer is: "Not necessarily!" One could start into the next volume perhaps before completing the work on all of the "flat" keys which are near the end of this book. However, if you are ever going to play with horn players, you should get used to the idea of playing in those keys. Flat keys pose rather advanced fingering problems to a guitarist. Woodwinds and especially brass instruments have a bit of a rough time in keys containing sharps. If your penchant is something along the line of "flamenco", you would very seldom encounter flat keys. The key of "D" minor might be about the extent of it. Flamenco style music is very guitar oriented so the popular guitar keys would be most common.

If you have completed this book in a few months of work, I would suspect that you already knew how to play the guitar rather well. You also probably had a relatively good grasp of music reading to add to your credit. How long it takes you to complete this book is quite irrelevant. Obviously more experienced players will do it faster than those who were relative novices when they began the process. I would suggest that a good student can digest most of the material in this book in about two years of study. That would work out to doing approximately one page per week. Realize that your learning should also involve material other than what is in this book. Learn to play melodies from fake books and be sure to work on "rhythm" guitar. When you consider all of these aspects and the actual exercise material in this volume, you may appreciate why the process does not happen overnight. Don't put an unrealistic deadline on how long it will take you to become an excellent player.

The next volume of Guitar Fundamentals begins the process of discovering the upper reaches of the fingerboard. Basic rules of fingering are explored through the use of modal scales and related exercises. Fundamental chord theory and chord-scale relationships are also investigated. The concept of developing chord solos is introduced.

A few facts of interest:

The guitar is the most popular instrument in the world. (Cheap to make and easy to carry????)

There are many more male guitar players than female. (The guitar is rather physical.)

Most young students will have given up the learning process by the time they have reached about the age of 20. (School, jobs, girlfriends and life in general, tend to get in the way.)

Most guitar students generally do not become particularly good music readers even if they eventually learn to play quite well. The guitar does not lend itself to music reading with the same kind of ease that many other instruments do. The guitar is the ultimate "optional fingering" instrument.

Don't let any of the above information deter you. Hopefully you began playing the guitar because you love music. This is the absolutely best reason for getting involved in a musical pursuit.

Good luck with book 2.

George Arvola