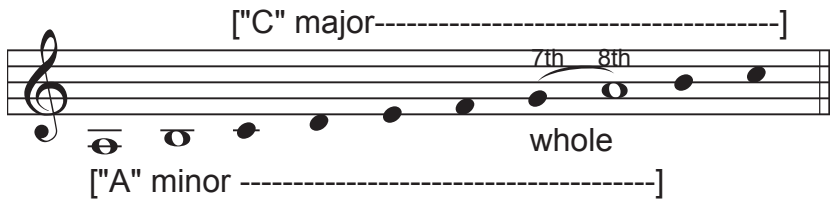


Minor Scales

A minor scale or a minor chord sounds melancholly or sad. Major scales and chords sound happy or content. Every major scale has a relative minor scale which begins on the 6th tone of the major scale. Another way to look at it is that the relative minor scale begins on a note that is two scale steps below the root of the major scale.



The major scale and its relative minor share the same key signature. Notice that the relative minor scale has a whole tone between the 7th and 8th steps. The 7th step of the scale is now called the "sub-tonic" as compared to being called a "leading tone."

3 versions of the minor scale are in common use.

"A" Natural Minor: This scale is called the natural minor not because it has only natural notes but because it has not been artificially altered.



Because the Natural Minor scale does not contain a "leading tone" (7th step being a semitone below the upper tonic note) it has been historically deemed to sound somewhat incomplete. The other two forms of the minor scale are adjusted to have a "leading tone."

The Harmonic Minor scale has a "musica ficta" raised 7th which also makes the distance from the 6th to 7th notes into a tone and a half. According to history, this interval was awkward to sing and that may be true.

(I don't seem to have too much problem with it and I am not a great singer. G.A.)

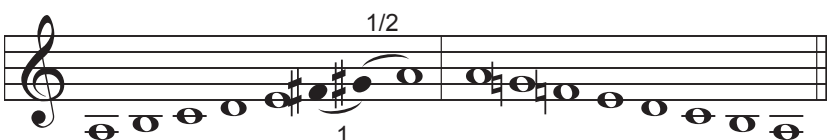
"A" Harmonic Minor:



In the Harmonic minor, the 7th step is raised by a semitone to produce a half step between the last two notes of the ascending scale. The 7th note is now called a "leading tone." (It leads to an obvious conclusion on the upper tonic note.)

To combat the problem of the one and a half tone leap, the Melodic Minor was developed with "musica ficta" (artificial music?). Both 6th and 7th tones are raised by a semitone in the ascending scale but returned back to their normal positions on the descending scale.

"A" Melodic Minor:



The leading note is not so important on the descending scale because all descending scales sound like they are resigning.

Probably the best argument for cancelling the sharps on the descending scale is that if you did not do so, the descending scale would tend to sound like a major scale until you reached the 3rd step. For now it may be just as well to take all of the above for granted.

The notes in the minor scales are named in the same manner as in a major scale:

1=Tonic 2=Super-tonic 3=Mediant 4=Sub-dominant 5=Dominant 6=Sub-mediante 7=leading tone.