

(Book 5.) Lesson 1c.

Modal variations derived from the "real" melodic minor scale.

(See the note at the bottom of the page.)

	R	3rd	5th	7th	
"A"		AmMaj7	F#m7b5	D7	Bm7
"B"		Bm7	G#m7b5	E7	C+maj7
"C"		C+maj7	AmMaj7	F#m7b5	D7
"D"		D7	Bm7	G#m7b5	E7
"E"		E7	C+maj7	AmMaj7	F#m7b5
"F#"		F#m7b5	D7	Bm7	G#m7b5
"G#"		G#m7b5	E7	C+maj7	AmMaj7

Classical harmony (book harmony) teaches that the melodic minor scale descends without the altered 6th and 7th degrees. Jazz players tend to use the ascending form of the melodic minor scale whether the passage is ascending or descending. Some books refer to this scale as the "Real Melodic Minor."

The reason for the above is quite simple. The notes of the scale must, at least to some degree, be related to the chord in question. As an example: Suppose that the chord is Bm7 (B-D-F#-A) and you are truly in the key of A Minor. Any mode of the "harmonic" minor scale would disagree with this chord because the note "F" would be a natural note and not "F#." The Bm7 chord in this case is suggesting the "ii" chord that is derived from the Melodic Minor scale. The consequence is that your improv should be similarly derived from the Melodic Minor scale. A possible disagreement between the chord and the Melodic Minor scale would arise if you used the "classical" melodic minor descending where the adjusted notes are returned back to their natural positions. Hence, the "real melodic" would be the solution.

But remember: "Your ear is the final judge!"