

EXERCISE 1-2. See Workbook.

MINOR SCALES

Musicians traditionally memorize and practice three minor scale formations, although they are not used with equal frequency, as we shall see in a later chapter. One of these is the *natural minor scale*. You can see from the illustration below that the natural minor scale is like a major scale with lowered 3̂, 6̂, and 7̂.

C major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	1/2 steps between 2-3 & 5-6
Scale degree	1̂	2̂	3̂	4̂	5̂	6̂	7̂	1̂	
c natural minor	C	D	Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C	

Another minor scale type is the *harmonic minor scale*, which can be thought of as major with lowered 3̂ and 6̂.

C major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	1/2 steps between 2-3 & 7-8 7 th raised to get leading tone to establish pitch center
Scale degree	1̂	2̂	3̂	4̂	5̂	6̂	7̂	1̂	
c harmonic minor	C	D	Eb	F	G	Ab	B	C	

raise the 3rd & 7th

The third type of minor scale is the *melodic minor scale*, which has an ascending form and a descending form. The ascending form, shown below, is like major with a lowered 3̂.

C major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Scale degree	1̂	2̂	3̂	4̂	5̂	6̂	7̂	1̂
c ascending melodic minor	C	D	Eb	F	G	A	B	C

ascending melodic & descending melodic
1/2 steps between 2-3 & 7-8 1/2 steps down 5-6 & 2-3

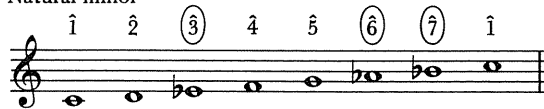
The descending form of the melodic minor scale is the same as the natural minor scale.

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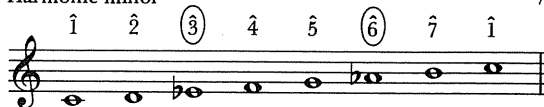
The three minor scale types are summarized in Example 1-13. The scale degrees that differ from the major are circled. Notice the arrows used in connection with the melodic minor scale in order to distinguish the ascending $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{7}$ from the descending $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{7}$.

Example 1-13.

Natural minor



Harmonic minor



Melodic minor

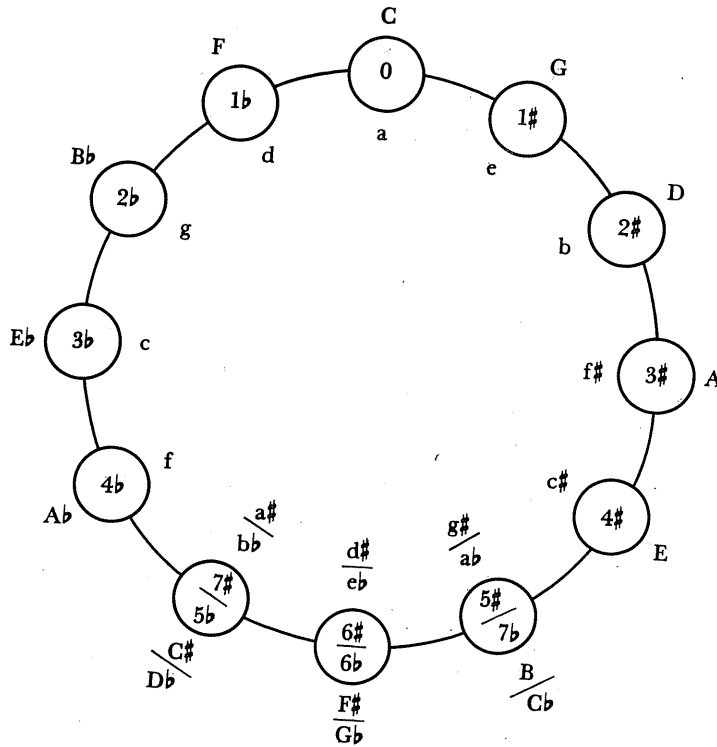


MINOR KEY SIGNATURES

Minor key signatures conform to the natural minor scale, no matter which minor scale type is actually in use. Looking back at Example 1-13, you can see that the natural minor scale on C requires three accidentals: $B\flat$, $E\flat$, and $A\flat$. The key signature of c minor, then, is the same as the key signature of $E\flat$ major; c minor and $E\flat$ major are said to be *relatives*, since they share the same key signature. The $\hat{3}$ of any minor key is $\hat{1}$ of its relative major and the $\hat{6}$ of any major key is $\hat{1}$ of its relative minor. If a major scale and a minor scale share the same $\hat{1}$, as do C major and c minor, for example, they are said to be *parallels*. We would say that C major is the parallel major of c minor.

The circle of fifths is a convenient way to display the names of the minor keys and their *relative* majors, as well as their key signatures.

1 1/2
1/2 1



You may find it easier to learn the minor scales in terms of their relative majors, as in the circle-of-fifths diagram above, than in terms of their parallel majors, which is how minor scales were introduced on pages 13-14. If you do use the relative major approach, remember that the key signature for any minor scale conforms to the *natural* minor scale and that accidentals must be used in order to spell the other forms. Example 1-14 illustrates the spellings for the related keys of F major and d minor.

Example 1-14.

F major scale

