



SCALES

Name _____

If you learn to play an instrument, you will become very familiar with musical scales as you work toward nimble fingers and quick thinking. **Scales** are arrangements of pitches in stair step order from lowest to highest or from highest to lowest. In our Western culture, the two most common scales are called **major** and **minor**.

MAJOR SCALES

Major scales are comprised of eight sequential notes, beginning and ending on the same letter, since only seven letters are available for use in music:

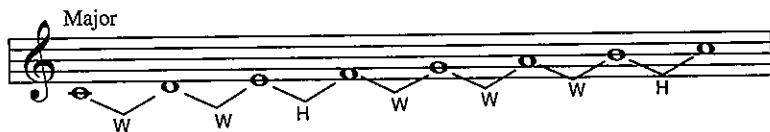
A B C D E F G

(then start over again!)

A **major** scale has half steps between the 3rd and 4th notes and between the 7th and 8th notes. This applies to any major scale in any key. Look at the diagram below to see where the half steps are. All other intervals in a major scale are whole steps.

H = Half step – the smallest interval. On the piano, half steps are between two keys that are next to each other. (Ex. B to C or D to D#)

W = Whole step – two half steps. On the piano, whole steps are between two keys with a key in between. (Ex. C to D or G to A)



In the C Major scale, starting on the note C, only white keys on the piano are used. Look to see where the half steps are on the keyboard

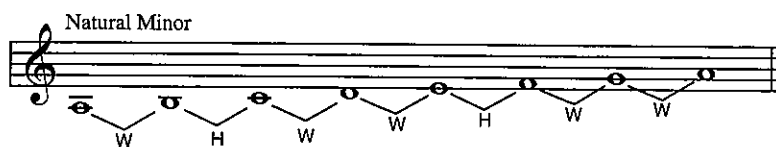


Number the pitches from one to eight and put in the absolute letter names from low C to high C.

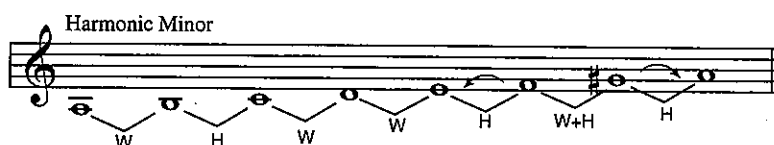
MINOR SCALES

In arranging major scales, we start on the **tonic**, which is the first note of the scale or the keynote. For example, a B Major scale starts on the note B (the tonic). Minor scales also center on their tonic, but their half steps occur in different places. There are three kinds of minor scales: **natural**, **harmonic** and **melodic**.

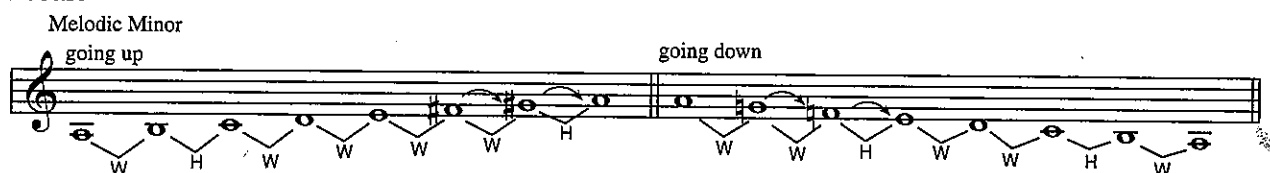
1. **Natural Minor** – the half steps occur between the 2nd and 3rd notes and the 5th and 6th notes and uses the same notes going upward and downward.



2. **Harmonic Minor** – the same notes as a natural minor scale, except the 7th note is raised a half step on the way up and on the way down.



3. **Melodic Minor** – the same notes as a natural minor, except the 6th and 7th notes are raised a half step on the way up the scale and are lowered to their original pitches on the way down the scale.



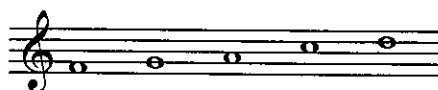
PENTATONIC SCALE

A pentatonic scale is a scale of only five notes, taking the major or minor scale and omitting the 4th and the 7th notes of the scale.

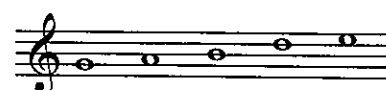
Label these pentatonic scales with the letter names of each note.



C Pentatonic



F Pentatonic



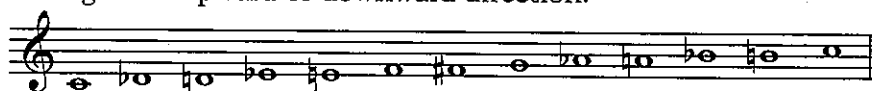
G Pentatonic

Next, draw and label the missing 4th and 7th notes in each key above.

Now, play a pentatonic scale, using only black keys on the piano, starting on G flat.

CHROMATIC SCALE

A Chromatic Scale uses all twelve consecutive half steps in an octave, starting on any note, then moving in an upward or downward direction.



Play a chromatic scale on a keyboard. Starting on middle C, play every white and black key in order until you reach the next C.

BONUS QUESTION

What are *tetrachords* and where did they originate? _____