

guitar

TECHNIQUE 4

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Chapter 1: The Harmonic Minor Scale

Earlier in our series of Guitar Technique books you were introduced to the natural minor scale (also known as the Aeolian mode), which is a minor scale built by starting the major scale from its sixth scale degree. Below is a one-octave natural minor scale in the key of A minor.

Ex. 1.1 Natural Minor Scale, Key of A

A B C D E F G A
1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1

In order to create a harmonic minor scale, we must raise the seventh scale degree by a half step, creating a leading tone that produces a strong and melodically pleasing resolution to the tonic. Below is a one-octave melodic minor scale in the key of A minor. Notice the augmented second between the sixth and seventh scale degrees. This interval gives the harmonic minor scale its characteristic quasi-Middle Eastern sound.

Ex. 1.2 Harmonic Minor Scale, Key of A

A B C D E F G# A
1 2 b3 4 5 b6 7 1
Augmented 2nd

Harmonic Minor Scale, Triads

By stacking the notes of the harmonic minor scale in thirds, starting from each scale degree, we get the triads of the harmonic minor scale. The inclusion of the raised seventh scale degree produces some unique sounding harmonies, including the augmented bIII chord. Most importantly, it adds a leading tone to the V (or V7) chord and allows composers to utilize a strong V-I cadential resolution. Note that in harmonic-minor based compositions, the II° and V chords are often extended to become II°7 and V7 chords.

Ex. 1.3 Triads, Harmonic Minor Scale

A mi B° C+ D mi E F G# A mi
I mi II° bIII ma+ IV mi V ma bVI ma VII° I mi

The tonic chord is a minor triad **I_{mi}**

The supertonic chord is a diminished triad **II[°]**

The median chord is an augmented triad **♭III_{ma}+**

The subdominant chord is a minor triad **IV_{mi}**

The dominant chord is a major triad **V_{ma}**

The submediant chord is a major triad **♭VI_{ma}**









The leading-tone chord is a diminished triad **VII[°]**

Harmonic minor scales and their diatonic chords were firmly established as standard musical language by classical-era composers such as Bach, Mozart and Paganini. Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* is a famous example of a piece of music utilizing harmonic minor melody and harmony. Harmonic minor tonalities were also heavily utilized in Russian and Middle Eastern folk music. Listen to the opening of Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slav* to experience a harmonic-minor-derived orchestral work based on traditional folk music. Harmonic minor harmony can also be heard in many jazz and Tin Pan Alley songs as well. In the early '80s, a new generation of rock-based neo-classical guitarists incorporated harmonic minor scales into their vocabularies extensively. For example, listen to Al DiMeola's "Egyptian Danza" and Yngwie Malmsteen's "Far Beyond the Sun."

Harmonic Minor Scale, Seventh Chords

Below are the seventh chords derived from the harmonic minor scale in the key of A minor.

Ex. 1.4 Harmonic Minor Scale, Seventh Chords

A_{mi}(ma7)	B_m7(♭5)	C_{ma}7(#5)	D_{mi}7	E7	F_{ma}	G[°]7	A_{mi}(ma7)
							
I_{mi}(ma7)	II_{mi}7(♭5)	♭III_{ma}7(#5)	IV_{mi}7	V7	♭VI_{ma}7	VII[°]7	I_{mi}(ma7)

The tonic chord is an A_{mi}/ma7 **I_{mi}(**ma**7)**

The supertonic chord is a B half-diminished 7 (minor 7th **♭**5) **II_{mi}7(**♭**5)**

The mediant chord is a C_{ma}7(**#**5) **♭III_{ma}7(**#**5)**

The subdominant chord is a D_{mi}7 **IV_{mi}7**

The dominant chord is an E7 **V7**

The submediant chord is an F_{ma}7 **♭VI_{ma}7**

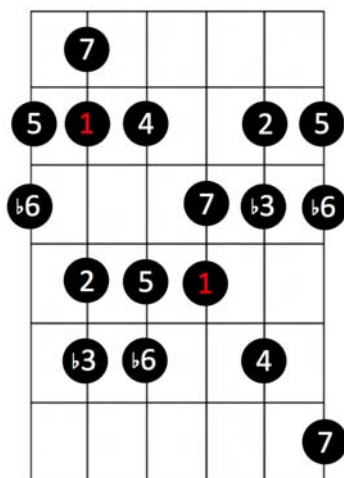
The leading tone chord is a G[°]7 (fully-diminished 7 chord) **VII[°]7**

Shown below is notation and a fretboard diagram for a Pattern 2 shaped harmonic minor scale. It is written in the key of A minor but should be practiced in all keys.

Ex. 1.5 Harmonic Minor Scale, Pattern 2, Key of A mi



Ex. 1.6 Harmonic Minor Scale, Pattern 2, Scale Diagram

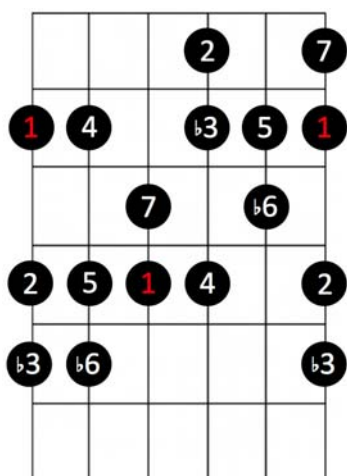


Shown below is notation and a fretboard diagram for a Pattern 4 harmonic minor scale. It is written in the key of A minor but should be practiced in all keys.

Ex. 1.7 Harmonic Minor Scale, Pattern 4, Key of A minor



Ex. 1.8 Harmonic Minor Scale, Pattern 4, Scale Diagram



Chapter 2: 16th-Note Picking Hand Workout, Part 1

Syncopated funk guitar rhythms with muted-string scratch sounds is a classic technique that is still ubiquitous on many pop, funk and R&B records. In order to master this style a fast, alternating 16th-note strumming motion with the wrist must be cultivated to the point where it flows naturally and can be effortlessly maintained throughout an entire song. Funk-style 16th-note strums are sourced via a short and compressed (but nonetheless relaxed) wrist motion.

Ex. 1.13

D9

T
A
B

Use the same chord shape (D9) and technical approach, then play through the following rhythmic variations as well

Ex. 1.14

Simile

Ex. 1.15

Simile

Ex. 1.16

Simile

Ex. 1.17

Simile

Note that all of the picking hand exercises you will be presented with in this book can also be applied to *single-note lines*. Look at the following example.

Ex. 1.18

Musical notation for Ex. 1.18, showing a 4/4 time signature with a treble clef and a guitar TAB below. The melody consists of four groups of four eighth notes, each group starting with a downstroke followed by three upstrokes. The TAB below shows the fret numbers: 2, x, x, x, 2, x, x, x, x, 2, x, x, 2, x, x, x.

You can also apply this principle to scale sequences:

Ex. 1.19

Musical notation for Ex. 1.19, showing a 4/4 time signature with a treble clef and a guitar TAB below. The melody consists of four groups of four eighth notes, each group starting with a downstroke followed by three upstrokes. The TAB below shows the fret numbers: 5, x, x, x, 3, x, x, x, x, 5, x, x, 6, 5, 3, 4.

Writing out all possible ways these principles can be utilized is outside the scope of this book. Be creative and look for smart ways in which you can get as much mileage out of the material as possible.