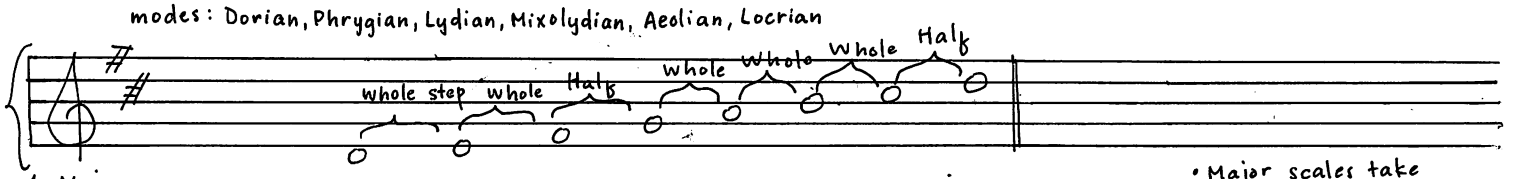
concept explainer: scales

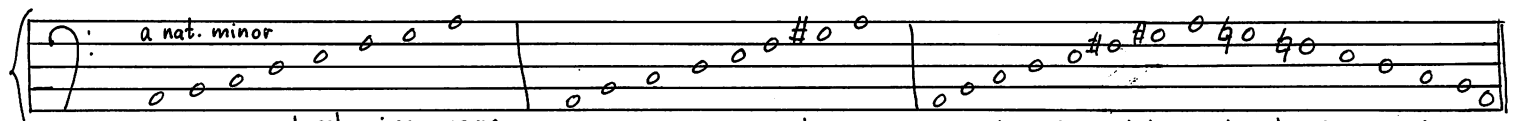
types of scales:
- Major
- minor: harmonic, melodic, natural
- chromatic
- whole tone
- modes: Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, Locrian



1. Major

starts and ends on given note. this is a D Major scale.
same signs as Major key or this pattern: Whole, Whole, Half, Whole, Whole, Whole, Half

• Major scales take capital letters (not „d major")

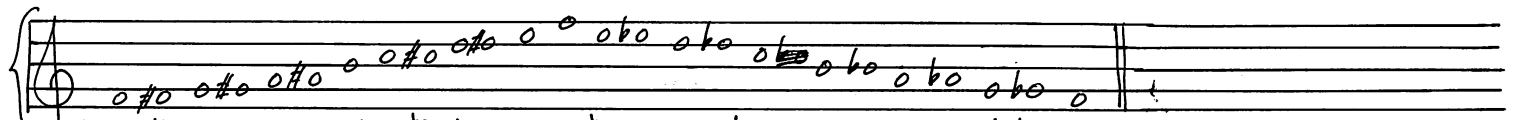


2. minors

natural minor: same signs as key.
or WHWWHWW

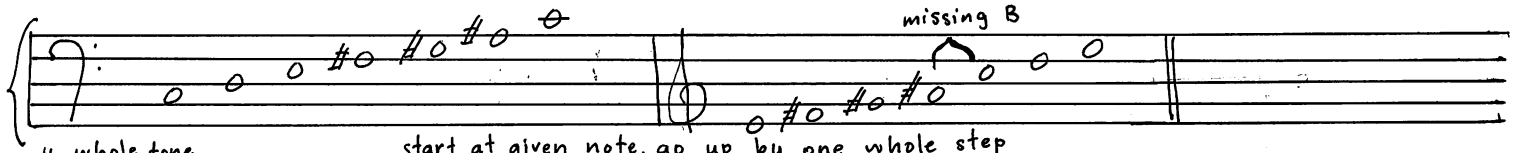
harmonic minor: take natural minor, raise 7th note one half-step.
WHWWH[1½]H

melodic minor: take natural minor, raise 6th & 7th on the way up, lower them back to normal on the way down (½-step change).



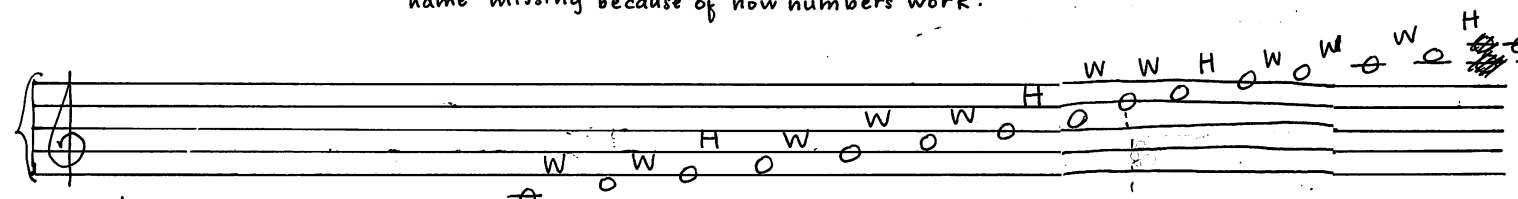
3. chromatic

every note for an octave. use sharps going up & flats coming down for prettiness if desired.



4. whole tone

start at given note, go up by one whole step (whole tone) every time. you will have one note name missing because of how numbers work.



5. modes.

Modes are like the pattern of whole & half steps that you get from shifting the pattern of the Major scale.

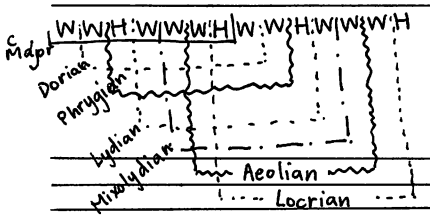
D → D: Dorian mode: WHWWWHW

my method for forming modes:

1. write out two octaves of Major scale step pattern
2. segmenting one octave from each step of the scale, write out the mode names in order

(2A). make a mnemonic to help you remember the order. mine is Dorian was Frigid (Phrygian) because Lydia(n) Mixed his Aoli (Aeolian) and Locked it away.

3. double-check your work: Aeolian mode is like starting on A in a C-Major scale, so it has the same pattern as a natural minor scale (WHWWHWW).



Lydian mode: WWWHWWH